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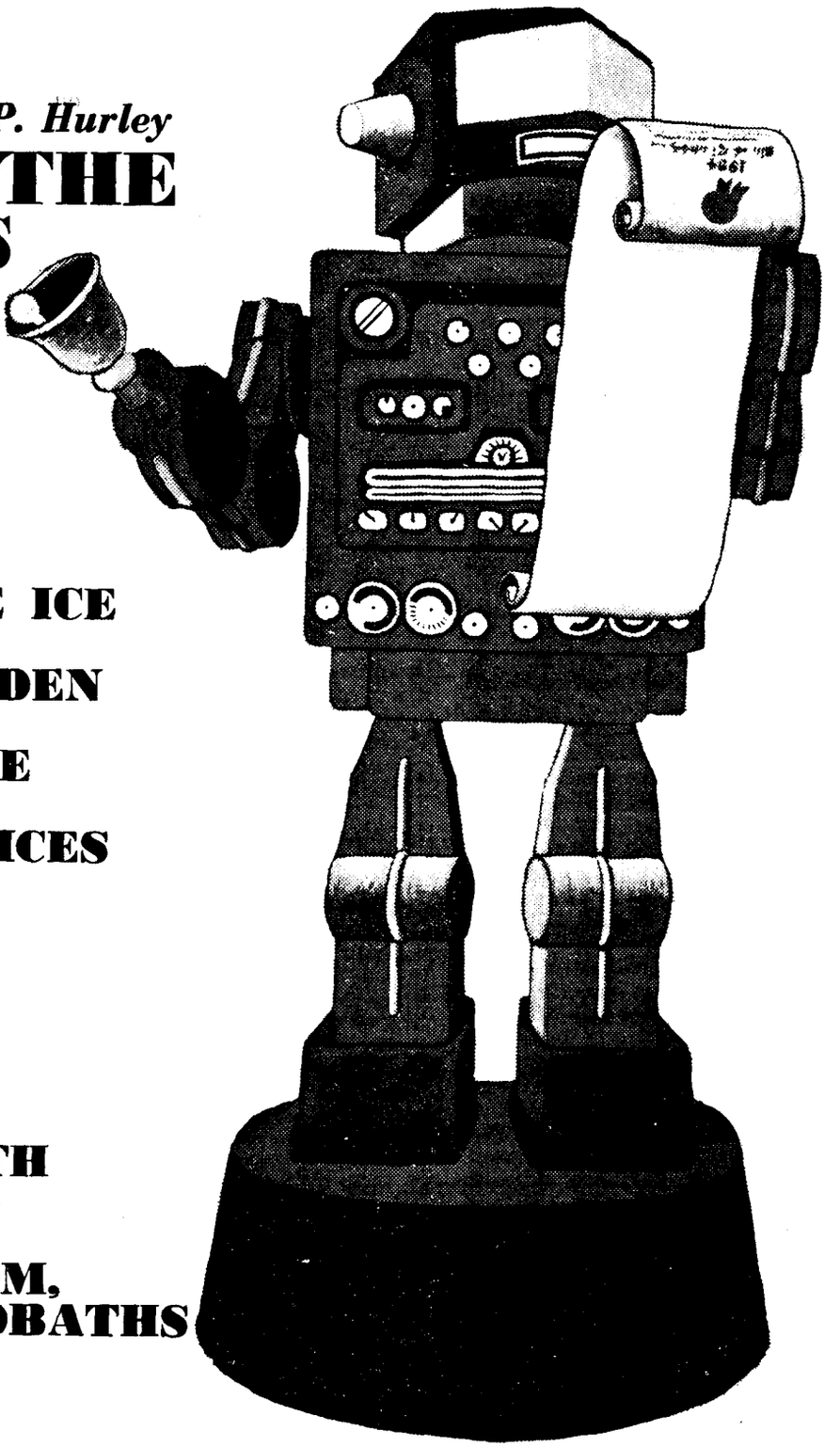
THE COMING OF THE ANOIDS

Neil P. Hurley



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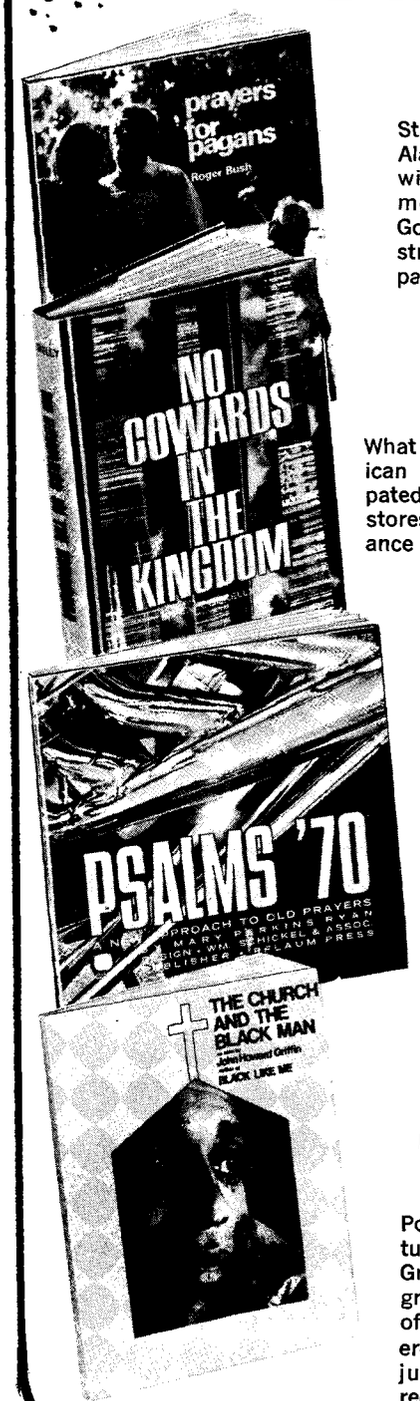

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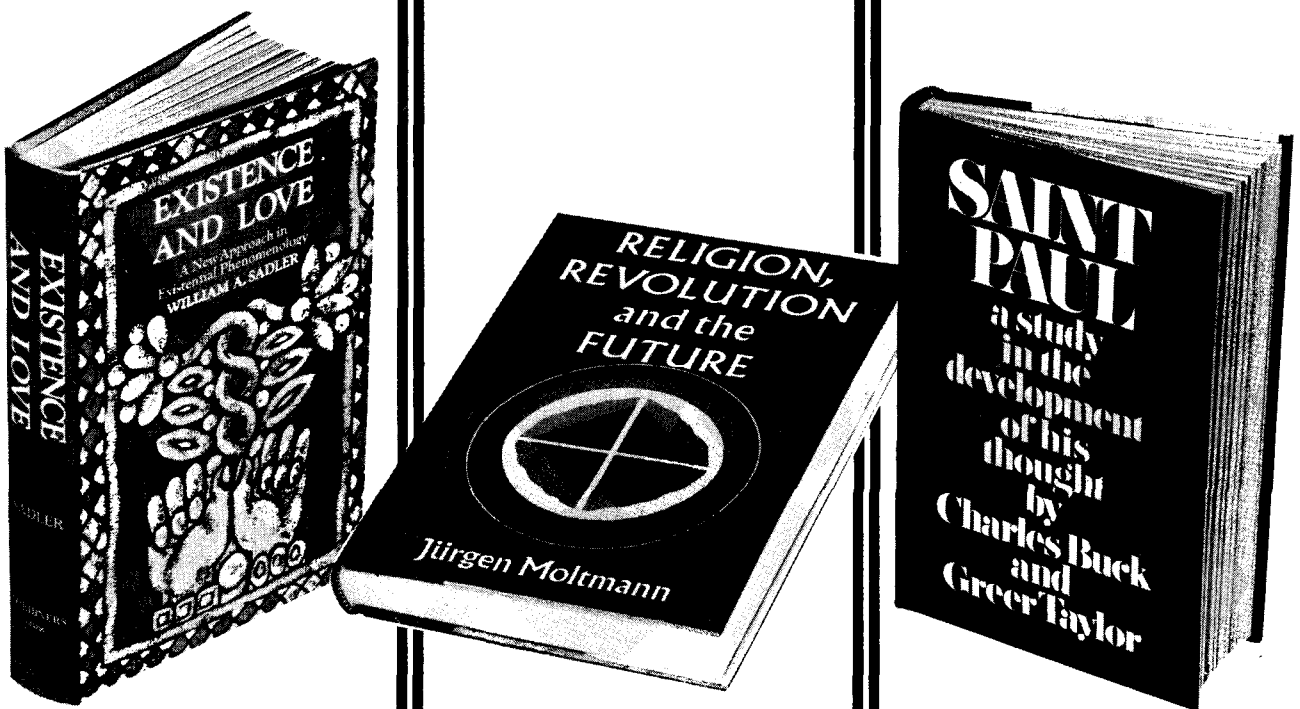

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NEWS & VIEWS

SALT and I. F. Stone

In the wide, weird world of Nixonian secrecy (secret pacts with Thailand, secret formulae for ending the war, etc.), it follows that talks with Russia on limiting strategic arms should also be secret—secret not only from the media (the Agnew spasm in Des Moines prepared us for that), but secret too from those whose Constitutional charge it is to "advise and consent."

So to hell with Congress. Senator Albert Gore reveals that an executive session of the Senate Subcommittee on International Organization and Disarmament had to be cancelled because the White House barred officials of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency from meeting with the senators. The White House sent word that it would appraise the Congress in its own good time about program for Helsinki.

Commented Gore: "This is the first time to my knowledge that an agency charged with a responsibility in the field of foreign affairs has not been willing—or, in this case, free—to meet with the disarmament subcommittee on a subject on which the subcommittee has had jurisdiction."

The development was dismaying for the further indication it provided on Nixon's funk about functioning in open forums, and also because it dragged more clouds over the strategic arms limitation talks (SALT).

Countries like Brazil, Canada, Mexico, Pakistan, Sweden are getting more than a little fed up with the treaties-game Russia and the U.S. are playing with one another. It is easy to see why.

Right up to Helsinki, the U.S. and Russia both displayed far more interest in advancing respective arms projects—SS-9, ABM, MIRV—than in negotiating controls.

Even the treaties on the books smack more of U.S.-Russian self-interest than they do of broad concern for the world's security.

Nothing relieves one's doubts, including the most solemn pronouncements of the negotiators themselves. Last April, Harold Brown of the U.S. negotiating team wrote in *Foreign Affairs* on arms control; dissect the article and what is it but a pitch for a defense predicated on ABM and multiple reentry vehicles.

I. F. Stone is of the opinion that the strategic arms talks are an exercise in deception. "SALT spells fraud," declares Stone. "A President who wanted Senator Jackson as Secretary of Defense and settled for Laird and whose most influential mentor seems to be Major General Strom Thurmond, is not likely to negotiate an end to the arms race."

That's mighty depressing talk.

But what is positively chilling is Stone's hunch that SALT could *initiate* rather than prevent a new spiral in the arms race, since the disposition is mutual for control "*after* and not before the construction of anti-ballistic missiles and the deployment of multiple warheads on each side."

This, remarks Stone, opens the prospect of an endless arms race, in quality if not quantity.

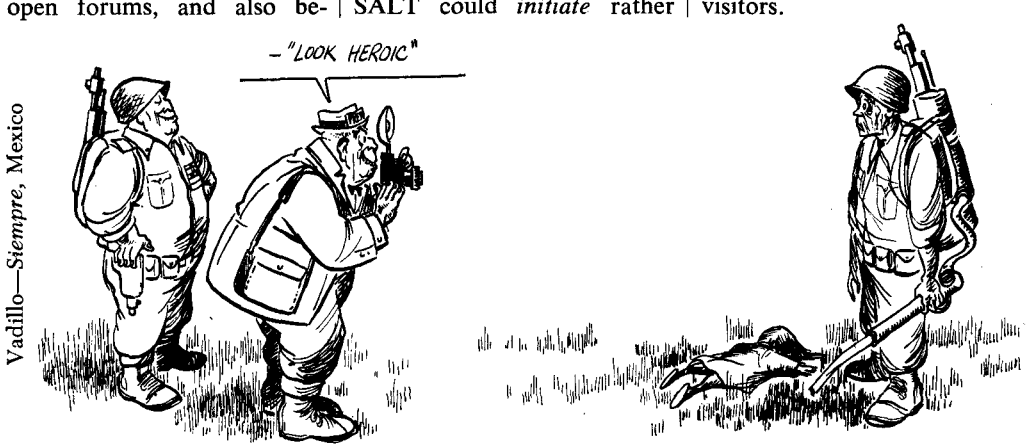
Well, put I. F. Stone down, if you will, as a paranoid and a cynic. We'll go along only to the extent of saying we hope he's wrong. Even that isn't a strong hope, for I. F. Stone's skepticism has too often been the barometer of fact and truth. We suspect it is again with SALT.

"I Was Cold and . . ."

Parochial hearts were gladdened when two Catholic churches in Washington—SS. Paul & Augustine and St. Peter's—agreed to serve the needs of people arriving for the Nov. 15 Mobe.

SS. Paul & Augustine was to be one of a half-dozen reception centers. St. Peter's was to be the movement center for SANE. Or so the literature said. Chancery, however, said otherwise, and that was that.

Private institutions did better by the cold and the tired. Academies like Gonzaga and St. Cecelia received the demonstrators. Georgetown U. opened four houses as a movement center and processed 3,000 persons. Even Catholic U. cooperated, serving soup and sleeping 2,000 visitors.



Vadillo—*Siempre*, Mexico

The Money Pinch

Financial figures on the Catholic Church in the U.S. were once impossible to come by; they're meager even in this day of alleged openness and candor. But those figures which are available confirm one thing unmistakably; the church is being hit where, as the saying goes, it hurts the most—in the pocketbook.

The Diocese of Tucson reports an imbalance of $7,146 for the year past. New York's operating deficit is placed at $1.2 million, and in Detroit 69 parishes had to borrow $3.9 million to meet '68 expenses.

Part of the problem, of course, is inflation and new diocesan services. But the larger reason why the church in the U.S. is hurting is that people just aren't giving as they used to.

Cardinal Cushing reveals that the income of the Archdiocese of Boston has declined at "an alarming rate" since 1965, and that if the trend continues budget losses could triple present accounts.

His immediate complaint: the non-fulfillment of pledges in a fund drive to liquidate archdiocesan debts.

Unless the situation corrects itself, said Cushing, every activity in the archdiocese will suffer. He sounded more plaintive than hopeful.

Boston's annual deficit is $4.5 million and rising.

Odds and Ends

—To SEX, BVD, GOD and other three-letter words banned from license plates, California has added PIG. Still available, however, is HOG.

—Murray Kempton sizes up John Marchi, New York's mayoralty loser come senatorial aspirant: "He reminds you of no one so much as the chaplain of some Duchess of Tuscany, with the difference of course that Marchi is American enough to believe in God." JOHN DEEDY

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CORRESPONDENCE

Spilling Ink

Lawton, Okla.

To the Editors: Why is it that so much useful white space is wasted, and gallons of good printer's ink are spilled on . . . Daniel Berrigan?

The world can no longer be saved by self-styled martyrs with a quasi-poetic flow of words, signifying nothing; nor by pseudo-mystic sacrifices of nepalm and duckblood. We need action. All the heat and energy spent on the deification of fabricated heroes bloated with self-importance could be channeled for better purposes.

If modern renewed, revitalized, progressive Christianity has nothing better to offer than the Berrigans and their ilk, it might as well go back to the Catacombs. CAROLE MYERS RENOE

A Sense of Values

Los Angeles, Calif.

To the Editors: Your editorial, "The Anachronistic War" [Sept. 19] has dismayed me. The phrase "Hanoi's heroic resistance" is the case in point. It reveals a distorted sense of values.

How can anyone apply the word heroic concerning a regime whose proponents practice as a matter of policy lobbying mortar shells blindly into cities, caring nothing whether they strike man, woman or child, friend or foe, civilian or military; further whose steadfast refusal to allow the Red Cross to inspect their prisoner camps on the pretext "these men are not war prisoners but criminals attacking the North." Still further refuses to let the families of these prisoners learn if their men are dead or captive.

A government this insensitive to humans is typical of dictatorships. The term strong and ruthless might serve but never heroic. To apply this type of terminology with the connotation it has reminds me of the mental processes evidenced by one of Mussolini

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THE THREAT FROM SPIRO

Is liberal concern over the recent display by Vice President Agnew merely an overreaction? When his critics charged that the Vice President is threatening Constitutional guarantees and attempting to silence dissent, are they, as Agnew maintains, only denying the Vice President the right to argue his views vigorously while maintaining that prerogative for themselves? But Mr. Agnew did not simply offer a few opinions of his own. His statements, linked with others by Administration figures, suggest that the government may be embarking on a deliberate policy of repression.

The Vice President did not, for example, launch a genuine attack on the narrowness, in control or outlook, of the television networks or major newspapers. To do that, he would have had to consider the power of the *Chicago Tribune* and *New York Daily News* as well as that of the *New York Times* and *Washington Post*. Nor, on the other hand, did the Vice President launch a straightforward attack on the substance of the views with which he disagrees. He did not, to cite one instance of many, rebut CBS's Marvin Kalb's statement, made after Nixon's Nov. 3 speech, that "the Ho Chi Minh letter contained some of the softest, most accommodating language" of any recent Communist document on the war. Instead, Agnew only expressed royal displeasure at the very idea that Kalb "twice contradicted the President's statement." What is the logical conclusion of the Vice President's neither-fish-nor-fowl approach? That TV or newspapers must be criticized, controlled, pressured, only when they deviate from the Administration's views, in sum, that the range of political discussion should be narrowed rather than widened.

Steve Gilbert/LNS

And to make his point perfectly clear, the Vice President has accompanied

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his protestations of distaste for censorship with threats, carefully worded so as to remain ambiguous, but threats nonetheless. In one speech it was a reference to the inevitable repression. in another it was talk about separating rotten apples, in his Montgomery performance it was the following: "Oh yes, the preceding generation had its own breed of losers and our generation dealt with them through our courts, our laws and our system. The challenge is now for the new generation to put its house in order." Pardon us for being so inquisitive, but is the man, or is he not, referring to the old McCarthy period and calling for a new one?

All the necessary material and apparatus are certainly there. Informers are nicely distributed throughout political groups. Phones are tapped. Files are bulging with unverifiable charges. The F.B.I. carries on in the unrestrained fashion which led Carl Rowan (not Abbie Hoffman or Jerry Rubin) to accuse it of virtually establishing a police state.

Such material and apparatus must only be mixed with a purposeful effort at defamation by public officials to explode into McCarthyist hysteria. And what are we to make of Cabinet members who term the recent mobilization in Washington "Communist or Communist-inspired"? What are we to think when a member of the Subversive Activities Control Board calls up local broadcasters to ask about political commentaries? What does it mean when a supposedly secret intelligence report on anti-war activities, which has every reason to be precise, suggests vaguely that Hanoi has had an "important input" into these activities? What can we expect when the Attorney General, chief law officer of the United States, expresses his desire to take some of America's liberals and, in his wife's words, "change them for the Russian Communists"? The worst, it seems, the worst.

A PYRRHIC VICTORY?

The Haynsworth nomination has deservedly gone up in smoke, but the liberal victory which was the Senate vote could easily be Pyrrhic. The new nominee which Richard Nixon promises for January will undoubtedly be a paragon of legal ethics (never again such slipshod checking into background as with Clem Haynsworth); on the other hand, Nixon could go so much further to the right for his choice that Haynsworth could look by comparison as a dashing progressive.

The basis for this concern rests not merely in a doping of Nixon's psyche, but in his own reaffirmations about restoring "proper balance" to the Supreme Court, and in the unhappy appointments which he has made to the prestigious Circuit Court. To that bench he recently named George Harold Carswell, a Northern Florida district judge whose rulings on desegregation have been consistently reversed, and Charles Clark, an unreconstructed Mississippian whom *The New Leader* identifies as "a chief strategist" of that state's war against the Supreme Court; and, according to the same source, Nixon's eyes are now on Charles E. Simons Jr., a former law partner of Strom Thurmond, and Edwin M. Stanley, a North Carolina judge known as "Sam Ervin's favorite." The situation, in a word, is not constructed to inspire prolonged glee over the outcome of the Haynsworth case.

Even so, the Haynsworth case is far from meaningless historically, as it appears to have solidified a return of the Senate to an earlier policy of examining the ideology as well as ethical fitness of nominees to the Supreme Court. One can say this even though the principal challenges were to Haynsworth's ethics rather than his Dixie attitudes on civil rights and labor. This was a surface thing; in many respects, liberals played the game conservatives did a year ago when they decried Abe Fortas' judicial conduct but stood their ground in opposition to his elevation to Chief Justice on the basis of Fortas' liberalism.

The tactic might be devious, but there is a logic to support the practice. Something more than brightness and the personal ethics of an individual should figure in the determination of the person's qualification for the bench which gives law and justice their essential directions. Scrutiny must go much deeper.

Attorney General Mitchell exclaims that this is intruding on the prerogative of the President. That is so much nonsense; to advise and consent does not mean to rubber stamp. Presidential nominations warrant a hard look at all times—and never more than at the moment when the effort to turn the country around is calculated to point it backwards.

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Tenants' Revolt In Ann Arbor

This fall the Ann Arbor Tenants Union, an organization composed primarily of University of Michigan students, moves into the second round of a rent strike that is already developing much of the legal and political strategy for similar movements across the country. The strike, which began last February with over 1,200 tenants depositing their rent in an escrow fund—set up in a Windsor, Canada bank to prevent police seizure—has succeeded in winning impressive court victories and demonstrating its own organizational viability.

The housing situation in Ann Arbor, like that of Berkeley or Madison or Cambridge, is ideally suited for a rent strike. Both the town and the University have been notoriously lax in providing low-cost apartments, and students have been thrust into a situation in which they have few alternatives. Housing is controlled by a

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small group of landlords, who have been able to charge rents of over $300 per month for an average two-bedroom apartment. The demands of the landlords are those associated with luxury housing: twelve-month leases, two months rent plus a damage deposit *in advance,* payment of all utilities except heat. But cheap building materials, poor maintenance, and numerous violations of the Ann Arbor housing code (which the city has done little to enforce) have turned many apartments into "luxury slums," as the Tenants Union aptly describes them. A 1965 study showed an average net profit for owners and managers of 18 to 25 percent, a figure that has made it possible to pay off mortgages on some buildings in as few as three to six years.

The demands of the Tenants Union are consistent not merely with the needs of students but with those of any group caught in a rent squeeze. They are seeking recognition as bargaining agent for the tenants they represent plus substantial rent reductions, a say in determining the length of leases, lower advance deposits (with interest on the deposit paid to the tenant), and improved maintenance service.

To join the strike a tenant withholds his rent from his landlord and deposits it in the escrow fund, which has Trustees who are bonded so that the tenant can be assured of repayment. From that point on, the tenant is protected by the legal counsel of the Tenants Union. The fear of eviction, a major worry at the start of the strike, has now been overcome, as tenants have learned that they too can benefit from the law. In Michigan a tenant cannot be evicted until his landlord has first served him with a notice to quit and then obtained a court order. This initial process takes at least a month to complete, and then the tenant has another month in which to make use of his legal rights. At this time he may ask for a jury trial in order to obtain a reduction of rent on the grounds that his landlord has violated housing codes or failed to maintain his apartment adequately. In some case the results of such trials have been minimal (a $20 reduction for a faulty shower nozzle), but in a vast majority of cases there has been a reduction of some kind, and in some instances it has been as high as $300 or $400. Finally, after a decision has been given reached by the court and all appeals are exhausted, a striker may legally retain his apartment by paying what he owes and then start the whole process all over by withholding his rent again.

The point of forcing landlords to go to court to collect back rent is, however, an organizational and not a legal tactic, as the Tenant Union sees it. The courts are simply not designed to handle large numbers of eviction proceedings. It is months before even a small number of cases can be brought to trial, and in the meantime landlords lose both rent and interest and must go through expensive legal battles to collect less than they normally would.

For Ann Arbor landlords, who at one point characterized the strike as the work of a "small minority of activists," there has been minimal recourse. At the start of the strike many of the landlords tried harassment, either in the form of cutting off heat or physical intimidation. But tenants ordered gas or oil directly from the utility companies (and then subtracted charges from their rent), and the Tenants Union organized a "mobile tactical squad" that would come to the defense of strikers day or night. On the legal side, landlords have been equally unsuccessful. Tenants have not only been able to secure jury trails and demonstrate good reason for reductions in rent, they have also prevented the landlords from obtaining an injunction against the Tenants Union. As of now, the most tangible result of the landlords' legal actions, which include a vaguely worded conspiracy suit against twelve members of the Tenants Union, is that they have provided strikers with a slogan—Join Your Local Conspiracy—to go along with their playing of Bob Dylan's "Dear Landlord." There is, on the other hand, hope of future strike benefits from a "class action" suit that has been filed on behalf of *all* tenants who, during the last four years, rented from the Ann Arbor Property Managers Association.

As a result of its early battles, the Tenants Union now feels it is in a better position than the landlords to endure a strike. It is also deeply aware of the relevance of the Ann Arbor strategy to other communities, and rent strikers, who have been in contact with students on other campuses, are hoping to be of assistance in black as well as in poor white communities near Ann Arbor. As one of the strike leaders observed, "I don't think we've devoted all our time to this struggle just to make things a little more comfortable for a group that already has things pretty good." Certainly, the likelihood of rent strikes across the country grows as a strategy for holding them evolves, and no legislation appears that would guarantee tenants unions collective bargaining rights with landlords comparable to those industrial unions possess with their employers.

NICOLAUS C. MILLS

(Nicolaus C. Mills is a member of the English Dept. at the University of Michigan.)

NEXT WEEK

MICHAEL ELMER and FATHER JORDAN BISHOP, O.P. write about the recent Nixon policy statement on Latin America:

"It is still early to include a representative sample of Latin American opinion, but one may safely say that the orientation chosen by Mr. Nixon will increase the influence of Latin American oligarchies, maintain the status quo, and consolidate United States domination."

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Defending Freedom, Preventing Bloodbaths

"Should I remain silent while what these heroes have done is vilified by some as 'a dirty, immoral war' . . .?—Vice President Agnew, Nov. 20, 1969

"Beatings were common . . . G.I.s in his unit were empowered to shoot any Vietnamese violating a 7 p.m. curfew, but in practice it was largely a matter of individual discretion whether a soldier chose to fire at a stray Vietnamese hurrying home a few minutes late. . . . Similarly, it was permissible to shoot at any Vietnamese seen running, but, as Eriksson put it, 'the line between walking and running could be very thin.' . . . Several enemy prisoners were taken, and . . . two were summarily killed. . . . A corporal . . . tried to strangle another of the prisoners."—From *Casualties of War* by Daniel Lang (McGraw-Hill, $4.50; paper, $1.50), the *New Yorker* account of the kidnapping, rape and murder of a South Vietnamese girl and the experience of a soldier who refused to participate and tried to report the crime.

"We Americans are a do-it-yourself people—we're an impatient people."—President Nixon, Nov. 3, 1969

"They would get the people together and gather them in groups. Then they would shoot them with rifles and machine guns. . . . It took 15 to 20 minutes." —Sgt. Michael A. Bernhardt, on the Songmy massacre.

"SAIGON, South Vietnam, Nov, 21—The South Vietnamese Government declared today that no massacre was committed by United States troops against Vietnamese civilians in the village of Songmy on March 16, 1968. The declaration, approved this morning by President Nguyen Van Thieu . . ., describes the civilian deaths in the village as a normal and unavoidable act of war and places the blame for the loss of civilian lives on the Vietcong. . . . It said that the number of victims totaled about 145—125 of the enemy and 'about 20 civilians.' . . . As the American troops entered, the Government said, they met heavy resistance. The American troops were forced to call in artillery and air strikes, according to a military official and 20 civilians were said to have been killed.—New York Times, Nov. 22, 1969

"I remember this man distinctly, holding a small child in one arm and another child in the other, walking toward us. They saw us and were pleading. The little girl was saying, 'No, no' in English. Then all of a sudden a burst of fire and they were cut down. . . . Off to the left, a group of people, women, children and babies were standing around. . . . I heard this fire and here the machine gunner had opened up on all these people . . . and they were trying to run. I don't know how many got out. . . . There were two small children, a very young boy and a smaller boy, maybe 4 or 5 years old. A guy with an M-16 fired at them, at the first boy, and the older boy fell over to protect the smaller boy . . . then they fired six more shots. . . . It was done very business-like."—Army photographer Ronald L. Haeberle.

"Our precipitate withdrawal would inevitably allow the Communists to repeat the massacres which followed their takeover in the North . . . these atrocities . . . would become a nightmare of the entire nation." —President Nixon.

"Saigon radio reported that by December 31, 1968 —one year after its inception—the joint Saigon-U.S. 'Phoenix' program for killing NLF village officials had caused the death of 18,393 persons."—Senator Charles Goodell, *The New Republic, Nov. 22, 1969*

The American people cannot and should not be asked to support a policy . . . unless they know the truth about that policy."—President Nixon.

"I wasn't threatened. I was just told not to mention it to anyone. . . . They kept us rather isolated after the village shoot-up. . . . There are certain people in the Army who did not want this brought out."— Sgt. Bernhardt.

"These young men made heavy sacrifices so that a developing people . . . might have a chance for freedom that they obviously will not have if the ruthless men who rule in Hanoi should ever rule over Saigon. What's dirty or immoral about that?"— Vice President Agnew.

"The great majority of the men in the company treated it as a victory. . . .—Sgt. Bernhardt.

"North Vietnam cannot defeat or humiliate the United States. Only Americans can do that."— President Nixon.

And have.

PETER STEINFELS

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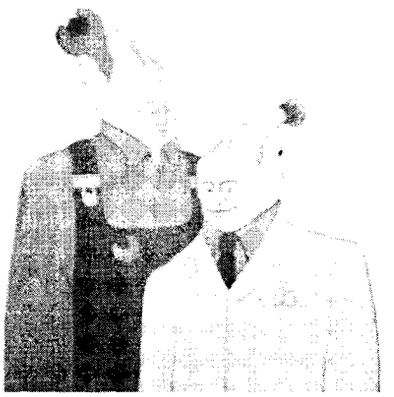
THE COMING OF THE HUMANOIDS

At what point does the human die and do the factory parts take over?

NEIL P. HURLEY



Science fiction has proven in the last 50 years to have a greater accuracy of prediction than, as a rule, demographers, economists and political forecasters. The reason lies partly in the fact that the authors of science fiction have intuitively grasped the inexorable dynamic behind the mechanization process.

In science fiction we see portrayed the uttermost limits of mechanization's logic, an extreme rationalistic view which arbitrarily arranges parts and techniques into utilitarian patterns without concern for ultimate purposes. Since the all-absorbing process of "automatization" is self-justifying, its inevitable term is a machine which is not a machine. Since Karel Capek's *R.U.R.* in 1921, dramatists, novelists and short story writers have played fancifully, sometimes frighteningly, with the idea of a robot which could simulate human behavior. In its most perfect incarnation, the robot takes on such life-like appearance as to be called an android or humanoid. The growing spate of fiction on androids is beginning to constitute a new literary category within the larger *genre* of science fiction.

We are all familiar with the heart transplant operation. In his short story, *The Fires of Night,* Dennis Etchison asks about replacing vital organs with, say, a plastic heart, a latex stomach, a fiberglass ribcage. He then poses the next logical question: Is it murder to kill someone who was part flesh, part plastic and metal? Etchison asks: "What was the point—25 percent 50 percent 75 percent? —at which the part that is human dies and the oiled, punched, guaranteed factory parts take over? How do you know when you stop being a person who is part machine, and become merely a machine that is part human?" The most logical step in prosthetics would obviously be the installation of a miniature computer in a human cranium to serve as the command and control center for artificial intelligence.

Such a step in the mechanization process leads us unequivocally to the case of the android, a subject whose wider implications may be discerned by a perusal of contemporary science fiction. In Norbert Wiener's *The Human Use of Human Beings* (1950), the author spoke of the Faustian compulsion to apply "know-how" without determining "know-what." This seems to be true of us Americans, who, unlike the Greeks, seldom view the harnessing of nature's powers with split emotions. Wiener speaks of the great figure of Prometheus, defying the gods of Olympus by bringing fire down from heaven to earth, as "the prototype of the scientist." If science constructs a thinking machine without any power of learning, then it will necessarily be a literal-minded servant of man However, that is not, as we shall see, the ultimate development in bio-engineering. Here science fiction can aid by supplying a good number of robot scenarios which permit us in the early stages of thinking machines to ponder the social and ethical implications of lens-eyed mannikins replete with synthetic skin, steel tendons, ball-bearing joints and preset responses. With this in mind, we may now pass to a selective sampling of android fiction in order to pierce the curtain of the future.

One distinguished science fiction writer, Isaac Asimov, implies that programming circuits in servomechanisms could be made to follow the three master principles of the world's ethical systems: (1) Every robot is to protect men, even allowing himself to be destroyed if necessary; (2) Every robot must defer to legitimate authority, even

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if disagreeable; and (3) Every robot is to insure his own self-preservation as long as it is compatible with Rule 1. Asimov's Rules of Robotics are common enough in the plots of other authors so that detection of an android may pivot on some test involving a violation of the altruistic nature of robo-psychology.

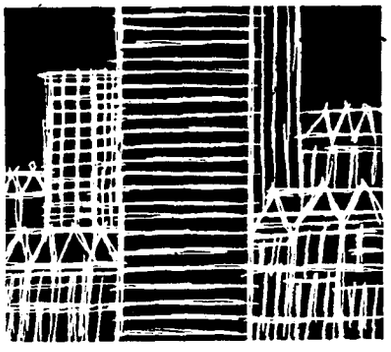
Contrasted with the benevolent, albeit deterministic, behavior of androids is the range of purposes to which their human masters put them. Nowhere is the application of automation for automation's sake better seen than in the typical entertainment story involving androids. Often the customary behavior of androids serves to increase the convenience, the efficiency and the pleasures of human beings. One boxing manager trains his fighter assiduously for a championship bout by using an android as a sparring partner, an android capable of simulating the pugilistic style of any boxer, living or dead. One night the fighter, without his manager's knowledge, inadvertently inserts in his mechanical "sparring partner" a programming subroutine which simulates himself. The result is an ironic death caused by fighting his automated *alter ego.* Richard Mathieson's story, *Steel,* deals with a similar Faustian compulsion to match human energy against mechanical force. Thus we find that "thinking robots," as highly intelligent and powerful means, are subservient to indifferent, at times trivial, ends.

In James Causey's *The Show Must Go On,* we see hate bars employed in order to siphon off the brimming aggressions of human beings. A similar therapy consists in the vicarious and cathartic sensations which human spectators at a circus derive in watching android performers accomplish perilous feats of strength and dexterity. The story ends with the accidental destruction of a female android by a beast. This pleases the crowd so much that every evening a similar tragedy is scheduled, thus recalling the "pan and circenses" psychology of the Roman amphitheatre in the days of Nero. Robots, as we see, are expendable in themselves, and must serve even such trivial ends of human beings as victims of a spectator sport.

Ron Goulart presents a less gruesome but no less disturbing story of android behavior in *Badinage,* a 1984-ish tale of the broad sanctions which a Credit Authority possesses in a totally cashless society. Goulart's android is a mechanical Iago, plotting to keep in perpetual indebtedness the story's protagonist, who, like Othello, finally recognizes the moral tilt in the robot's behavior and seeks to destroy him. Goulart has a subtle critical sense about the "law of irresistible use" implicit in the mechanization process, a law which seems to say that if a process can be automated, it will be automated. His imaginative concern has led to stories about android-staffed colleges, hospitals, old age homes and missions. Here the purposes which androids serve are more utilitarian, less casual.

The question of deviant behavior, implicit in *Badinage,* is more elaborately developed in Shelley Lowenkopf's *The Addict.* In addition to a pathological attraction for devouring fiction literature, Lowenkopf's female robot has been programmed to feel shame and modesty as well as superiority in the presence of non-humanoid robots. (The implication of caste and racial discrimination is clear.) Lowenkopf suggests that the solution for eccentric androids is much simpler than for human beings—reprogramming of the computer tapes. This "robo-therapy" eliminates anomic responses and guarantees social conformity according to the prevailing cultural "definition of the situation" in keeping with whatever is acceptable behavior. In these instances we have clearly medical and social ends being called into play regarding the disposition of automata.

The mechanization process not only permits progressive improvements on one and the same android but most especially between one generation of androids and a later one. Since robots may be improved till they acquire human appearance, the advanced model of android is capable of multiple responses and branching decisions as complex as those made by today's "man-in-the-street." In his story, *Evidence,* Isaac Asimov presents a superior android with a highly developed positronic brain. Having already served as district attorney, the android runs for the office of mayor and wins. Although neither omniscient nor infallible, the android mayor offers certain advantages to his constituency. Because of the first of the Three Laws of Robotics, he will never hurt human beings, even through corruption or tyranny. Undoubtedly the 21st



century will see political decision-making being done by thinking robots.

Once androids reach a stage of technical development where they cannot be distinguished from human beings, the possibility arises of serving as convenient "stand-ins" for persons. The issue of "replica-presence," as it is called, furnishes material for a large number of "android" science writings, particularly in the ability of life-size marionettes to satisfy adequately emotional needs for company, conversation, and even love. In *The Changeling,* Ray Bradbury presents a wealthy man who, tired of his mistresses and desirous of solitude, purchases automatic replicas of himself to keep six women happy. Brad-

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bury, unaware of the giant pun he created in this story of "sex-location," caught the essential preoccupation of those who, like T. S. Eliot, S. Giedion, Marshall McLuhan, Arnold Toynbee, Lancelot Law Whyte and Archibald MacLeish, lament the dissociation of thought and feeling in contemporary industrial society.

This split is described even more dramatically by Robert F. Young in *Juke Doll.* In this short story, Young depicts how the human void for affection is filled by a "doll-friend," who, even more than the paper-doll of popular music fame, is faithful to its human master. Speaking demurely in an electronic voice, this carefully-assembled puppet is found to be merely the extension of the master-puppeteer's strategy. While all the other plots mentioned earlier have philosophical and ethical overtones, the case of the "humanoid" and its power of "replica-presence" presents moral and metaphysical difficulties of the first magnitude.

When does an android cease being a literal-minded slave of human masters and become autonomous, or truly humanoid? Norbert Wiener gives the answer in *The Human Use of Human Beings,* saying that the machine "which can learn and can make decisions on the basis of its learning, will in no way be obliged to make such decisions as we should have made, or will be acceptable to us." Such is the case in Henry Kuttner's *Those Among Us,* an attention-arresting plot about an android, cast so perfectly in the image of man as to represent a threat to his fellow androids. Situated in the twilight zone of the organic and the inorganic, this humanoid undergoes the identity crisis of "the stranger," that outsider who must traffic convivially with others who know exclusively those rules of the game inside of which they are meaningful actors. Kuttner taxes to the utmost the principle of identity which underlies Western rationalism from the time of Aristotle: Can A be A and non-A at one and the same time? In other words, can a machine be human? One of Kuttner's characters indicates the alarming convergence of a possible man-machine incarnation: "When the first successful humanoid was produced by the robots." Here we have a giant hall of mirrors with an infinite series of human and mechanical reflections and counter-reflections.

The same identity crisis emerges from William F. Nolan's *The Joy of Living,* in which a mechanical bride (apologies to Marshall McLuhan!) is accepted by a widower for both his personal solace and his children's tutelage. Having developed an affective tie for her human husband, the pseudo-wife, Margaret, pleads eloquently not to be discarded on the argument that, in creating her, man imparted his own qualities of compassion and feeling. One finishes the story with an ambivalent reaction, of deep awe and grateful acquiescence, not at all dissimilar to the mingled feeling inspired by the Genesis account of the creation of man from the slime of the earth and of woman from his side. We are at the heart of the dilemma posed by the mechanization process. Is not the technologist somewhat like Prometheus defying the limits placed by the Gods of Olympus, in order to bring fire from heaven to earth?

It is true, as Buckminster Fuller has pointed out, that the discoverer always ventures into the outlaw area. It is important, however, that we know the antinomies implicit in all frontier-transcending enterprises, the sense of awe which should accompany our decision to chart the unknown. Norbert Wiener says that the application of "know-how" with little "know-what" is definitely Promethean, inevitably bringing its own punishment with it. This typical awareness of the Greek outlook is needed if man is to refrain from the Promethean urge to transfer to the machine made in his likeness, the responsibility for his choice of good and evil, without continuing to accept a full responsibility for that choice. Therein should be the indissolubly wedded elements of awe and acquiescence, the "Allelujah" of creaturely respect with the "Amen" of human creation.

Mankind must awake to the discovery that we set an irreversible course. The writings of Pitt, McCullough, Wiener, Shannon, Pierce and Roseblith, to name a few of the leading names in the field of engineering biophysics, point to a cybernetic world where "feedback" arrangements could produce a high order of consciousness with a corresponding capacity for language and interpersonal communication. Is human voluntary action, after all, more than a choice among psychic tropisms so that the direction of commitment is given by the most useful resolution of decision vectors? If it is not, then androids will compete with men and perhaps overthrow them as Samuel Butler warned in the 18th century. His famous book, *Erewhon,* speaks of machines which could conquer mankind through the use of men as instrumental accomplices. If, on the other hand, man has an immortal soul which only God can create, then there can be no serious identity crisis as raised by mechanization's blind pursuit of technical virtuosity and efficiency. The crux is in the matter of ends and not just means. If our purposes are clear then we can hallow the means.

Philosophy and theology aside, the problem still remains for all of us, just as for scientists such as Norbert Wiener, of approximating human rational performance by machines. After all, the physical identity of an individual does not consist in matter alone but "in a certain continuity of process, and in the memory by the organism of the effects of its past development." This simulation of essentially spiritual characteristics is the basis of a very unusual story by Charles Beaumont called *Last Rites.* Extremely sick, a long-standing friend of a priest calls him to his bedside and raises the issue of a humanoid soul: "If your friend were suddenly to reveal himself to you as a machine, and he was dying, and wanted very much to go to Heaven—what would you do?" The suspense of the tale lies in whether the question is hypothetical or biographical. Is the priest's friend an

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authentic human or the faultless blueprint projection of some master bio-engineer? Beaumont never tells us what the priest discovers after he anoints his friend.

One could go on documenting the insights raised by science fiction writers concerning "thinking robots." More imperative at this point is a public awareness that this "revolutionary revolution" to use Aldous Huxley's apt expression, is upon us. Before his death in California, Huxley told a reporter that his "Brave New World" was coming into being faster than he had anticipated. It is not yet a quarter of a century since Mark I was developed by Harvard's Howard Aiken. Since that time we have vastly improved on this cathode-ray tube model with miniaturized transistor models capable of playing chess, composing poetry and music, and designing art patterns. The idea of a tiny computer contained within an android skull is a logical step within the dynamics of the mechanization process. William F. Nolan says in the preface to his anthology, *The Pseudo-People*:

> "The birth of the first android, therefore, is a lot closer to us than we might imagine. Artificial hearts, lungs and arteries are already being developed in science; the artificial brain is the next major step toward the creation of humanized robots."

Ethicians, philosophers, moral theologians and behavioral scientists would do well to take science fiction more seriously, and most especially that body of literature which deals with robots, androids and humanoids. It is more possible to direct the mechanization process in the earlier stages of its course than when it has almost come to term in its definitive impact on society. Much concern over the spurious, even noxious, effects of technology arise out of the *fait accompli,* the distasteful, perhaps poisonous, fruit of seeds planted much earlier. In a very real sense, the future has already begun, as Robert Jungk wrote some years back. Those who may doubt that the future of androids has already begun should visit Disneyland in Southern California where regularly scheduled performances are held of a "replica-presence" of Abraham Lincoln: this truly amazing robot sits, stands, takes steps, makes gestures and speaks, even if imperfectly. If we can reproduce an Abraham Lincoln in Disneyland, what is to prevent science from bringing a Winston Churchill back to rule England?

INNOCENTS IN SCANDINAVIA

'Deserter USA'

PHILIP NOBILE

In late October, four nameless Defense Department emissaries appeared at a private New York screening of *Deserter USA*, a Swedish-made film of American deserter life in Stockholm. "You're not going to goad us into a statement," dodged a member of the party around a secret ambush from the press, "we're simply here to see a movie at the invitation of the distributor." A likely story. Two of the same gentlemen also "just happened to be in the neighborhood" a few days previous and "unofficially" dropped by Kanawha Films to request a copy of *Deserter*. Kanawha partners Paul Peralta-Ramos and Archer King refused. They were not about to hand over the only print to the Pentagon, and besides, the whole operation sounded phony.

The messengers would not say exactly who sent them, only that Defense was anxious to get their hands on the reels. However murky the explanation, one thing was allegedly made clear: in no way should this visitation be interpreted as an attempt to inhibit *Deserter*. For the Generals are interested solely in the welfare of the prodigals who, it shall not be forgotten, remain members of the military in spite of their fallen condition.

Playing along with the charade, distributors Ramos and King suggested a return engagement at the next *Deserter* preview. Sure enough, the original pair showed up again, this time accompanied by two more recognizable non-subversives. After viewing the film at attention, the Pentagon Four hustled out without comment, except to say that Kanawha Films would be hearing from them.

Deserter USA is a quasi-documentary of the hard times lived by American soldiers in the early days of Swedish exile. Shot by young Swedes and acted by real deserters, the film sustains itself more through radical will than aesthetic exercise. The direction is early home-movie and the script so much old-line talk about capitalist exploitation, big power imperialism and revolutionary struggle. Ho-hum. But the largely unknown story, that's something else.

After a brief newsreel history of the Vietnam war explaining the criminality which makes participation for many servicemen impossible, the action begins with the arrival of the first American defectors in Stockholm: "John, the leader type; Alan, the hippie; and the inde-

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cisive Ben." These three approximate the famous "Intrepid Four" whose flight from Japan via Moscow started the whole Swedish thing in 1967. Although the characters are composites, the events you are about to read really happened and are filmed in black and white.

First, the deserters were pressured by the folks back home. Expensive long-distance phone calls came from poor families; the most vulnerable always seemed the target; and the number was unlisted!

Second, a fellow from the CIA posed as a reporter to gain the confidence of some deserters and tried to lure them out of Sweden with promises of easy treatment. Another spy infiltrated the infrastructure, setting deserter against deserter. Both were trapped and exposed.

Third, neutral Sweden has not been straight idyll. In the early days the deserters were the object of attempted co-optation by Swedish pacifists. This spoonful of nonviolence would have made their embarrassing politics go down smoother. But the deserters refused. The situation got tight. Here and there sympathy sagged and the bureaucracy became more bureaucratic. The downswing was reversed when the deserters campaigned for public support. Speeches, marches and street pamphleteering convinced the people and thereby the government that Vietnam was an immoral mess and that American refugees deserved a better break. And so *Deserter USA* ends happily with our boys enjoying an honorable peace while continuing agit-propaganda against the war.

Late last summer, many months after the filming, I called to fix a rendezvous with one or two deserters but was put off a few days until the right combination could be rounded up. After the unhappy experience with the CIA *poseur*, the deserters like to be prepared for visiting journalists. The American Deserters Committee, an open alliance of Swedish auxiliaries and military émigrés from the US of A, is headquartered in a two-room underground apartment in clean, well-lighted Stockholm. Huddled between bookcases and piles of propaganda leaflets, four young defectors spoke to me about foreign tranquillity and domestic troubles. Sweden, they said, was fat country. Permanent political asylum is still withheld (political oppression is de facto impossible in western democracies according to the rules of the free world game) but the catch-all humanitarian asylum is now renewable without hassle. The labor permit lag is down from three months to three weeks. And while job-hunting goes on, the deserter is subsidized $20 a week for food and $60 a month for rent. He is even paid to go to school. "There are more opportunities here in terms of career, salary and advancement," Walter Marshall told me with obvious bitterness. "There is nothing in America for the high school graduate." Would the deserters come home if given amnesty? "Going back would be a cop-out. We're not guilty," insisted John Woods, "but maybe I'd go back to fight in the streets if revolution broke out."

This valley of disenchantment runs through the entire deserter community populated mainly by deadend kids from forgotten America—the white lower middle class. Blocked out of college for various financial and environmental reasons and closed out of jobs because of draft eligibility, they had nowhere to go but into the "New Action Army." The war was no immediate worry. Politics was a tabula rasa. Radicalization began only when the service became a continuous replay of their civilian life. Four case histories:

Walter Marshall, 20, didn't want to be a cabdriver for the rest of his days. In and out of foster homes and reform schools for most of his youth, he joined the Army at 17 and wound up in Vietnam. When the deception about his age was discovered, he was pulled out and given a general discharge. Marshall re-enlisted after a while and worked as an MP busting clandestine G.I. papers. Soon after acquainting himself with the literature he was helping to suppress, Marshall's vocational attitude changed. His superiors then switched him into busdriving. A put-up assault and battery charge precipitated the decision to desert. He made his way to Sweden via Montreal.

John Woods, 18, enlisted for the hell of it. He hitched up with the resistance movement inside the Army when he saw the raw deal he and his buddies were getting—sent off to be killed in a war they didn't understand, among other things. He was finally busted for publishing "subversive" materials and then received orders for Vietnam. At that moment Woods thought he ought to separate himself from the Army and deserted to Sweden from Germany.

Gene Ashberger, 21, once fought and killed in Vietnam. As combat reporter, however, his feelings gradually shifted from cold-blooded indifference to outright favor of the NLF. When Ashberger called it quits in Germany, he was about to be court-martialed for assaulting a Queeg-like officer who wanted his office repainted a different shade after it had just been painted according to his original specifications.

Bill Jones, 22, star of *Deserter USA* and leader of the deserter camp in Sweden, was a little more politically advanced before he joined the Army. He had two years of college and some idea that all was not right in America. Underwhelmed by Vietnam, he compromised a bit to join the Army as a medic. But even this limited collusion failed and he deserted 10 months later.

During this time of exile, Jones is working to complete the radical education of the already deserted and increase the flow of conversions. A new, inchoate political party called the Second Front International has been formed to facilitate these dual aims. The party newspaper, *The Second Front*, is distributed near European Army bases and in the U.S. with all the desertion news fit to print. "The war wasn't just a mistake," says Jones. "It goes deeper than that. Even if Vietnam never happened American society would be screwed up. There would also be political refugees like us. Perhaps we are a prototype for

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a larger exile movement which will come after the war is over and American social problems beget more agitators."

Meanwhile back in New York, *Deserter USA* has just found a Village theater. Uptown didn't want it. One chain director called the deserters a "bunch of punks." Another won't even see it. Less radical than the *Village Voice* and *East Village Other, Deserter* hasn't cracked the underground publicity mills. Defense Department film buffs are hot in pursuit, however. Last week the Motion Picture Service of the Office for Information for the Armed Forces, which has the self-proclaimed "responsibility to review films with a military background," entered the affair with a request to see *Deserter*. No reference was made to the two unrewarding sessions previously held with Defense representatives. Rather, the reply was to the distributors' Moratorium Day telegram to President Nixon suggesting he see *Deserter*. Even if the negotiations succeed, informed sources say Nixon will probably not be affected.

HANDS ACROSS THE ICE

Sovereignty in the Arctic

R. F. NEILL

Capitalistic exploitation of natural resources requires the prior establishment of property rights, as one would put it in the language of international relations; the establishment of sovereignty. Once the oil tanker Manhattan had completed its test journey through the ice fields of the Arctic straits, technical and economic feasibility of extracting the area's vast known oil and other mineral wealth was evident. Suddenly the establishment of sovereignty in the area took on more than formal significance.

What is still not evident, however, is by what government and within what limits sovereignty will be exercised. Within what limits will governments undertake to provide the necessary legal and material support for exploitation of the Arctic; and to what extent, in consequence, will they be able to tax the profits derived from it? Quite clearly, the actual exploitation will be carried out by the same large international corporations. Quite as clearly, in present world conditions, the only serious contenders for the governmental jobs are Canada and the United States. It's entirely a North American game and, because it is, the larger question of military sovereignty is not seriously disputed between the participants. But that does not entirely rule out the possibility that the sovereignty is in question.

To the extent that the rules of the international game can be considered established, most of the Arctic falls under undisputed Canadian jurisdiction. By international agreement in regard to mineral rights on a continental shelf, the exploitation of virtually all the land area under the waters of the northern archipelago is under Canadian jurisdiction. The land area of the islands is Canadian. There is an accepted three-mile limit to territorial waters, and a 12-mile limit to fishing rights that the Canadian government has successfully insisted upon. But that is all that is established, and the question is: can the permanently frozen waters beyond these limits be considered international, as are the high seas? It is clear, however, that even if they were not international, the passage of the Manhattan would not have been a violation of Canadian sovereignty. The Manhattan did, in fact, pass within the agreed limits of Canadian territorial waters; nonetheless, her right of innocent passage is commonly agreed upon in international law. Further, the fact that the Manhattan flew neither a Canadian nor an American flag can be of significance only if something is read into it.

Since the Manhattan passage, Canada has claimed, or has threatened to claim, sovereignty over the waters within the Arctic archipelago, regardless of the distance between the islands. It has to be admitted that this claim makes some economic and military sense. Geographic and climatic circumstances have necessitated close cooperation between government and private enterprise in northern development—to the extent that the distinction between the two ceases to be realistic. In particular, the northwest passage is not open water, and survival in the area requires special equipment and organization. The necessary services of the route would have to be provided by government, like lighthouses and weather reports; in the Arctic these will involve a much heavier complement of men and equipment.

In short, we have another case of the usual complications that accompany the advance of civilization. Wherever there are new techniques and different geographical settings, there will have to be institutional adjustments. It is always a question as to what kinds

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of property rights should be set up and how they are to be enforced in the face of the vested interests of developed institutions. In this context, some sense can be made of the claim that permanently frozen water should be treated as land. Transportation routes through permanent ice conditions necessitate the same heavy organization as transport on land. It is essentially a continental and not a maritime operation, involving the same economic and military problems and possibilities as an inland canal. In this way the claims of Canada's Minister of External Affairs Mitchel Sharp can be justified, but his allegations about special pollution problems do not seem to make the same kind of sense.

The larger issue of military or national sovereignty, of course, has its irrational dimension, and democratic political institutions in Canada and the United States have necessitated a display of tough talk on the part of public figures in both countries. If these assertions and counter-assertions are not to seem ludicrous they have to be viewed as a sort of North American family quarrel. Indeed, the idea of Canada's sending a task force to hold the Arctic *is* ludicrous; though that gesture, too, apparently is going to be made. The truth is, however, that the United States' military presence in northern Canada has been an established fact for some time. After the Dew Line and other Lines, SAC bombers, Bomarc missiles, a quarter-century of an explicit, joint defense program, including Norad, after all this the idea of an independent military defense by Canada is simply out of the question. It's obsolescent. As Canada's Prime Minister, Pierre Trudeau, has himself indicated, the whole idea of national sovereignty in the old style may be obsolescent for any country. In that context, and, in fact, as a matter of practical reality, if Canada owns the Arctic, then the United States owns it too.

One might even make a case, on the presumption of unitary military sovereignty in North America, that the whole ritual of assertion and counter-assertion between Canada and the United State has been well rehearsed. Faced with hostile opinion at home and abroad because of its military activities in foreign lands, the United States can ill-afford to assert complete control of disputed international waters in the Arctic archipelago. It may have to, of course, in order to keep Russian, Chinese, Japanese or other unfriendly and unwanted shipping out of the area. But not only would it then lose face, it would have to assert rights that it has consistently refused to admit in the case of other archipelagos, such as the Japanese and the Indonesian islands. How can the United States secure the whole American Arctic region while at the same time not make a sham of its assertion of rights elsewhere? Clearly, by having the Canadians secure the Arctic in apparent opposition to United States' interests. In either case the areas will be made secure for exploitation by the same, American-controlled, international corporations. It would be another instance (one is reminded that by U.S. law Alcoa was able to participate in international cartels only through its Canadian subsidiary, Alcan) in which the existence of a satellite country has advantages for citizens of the United States.

It may be that all of this is much too subtle and rational for the present state of international affairs, even though the parties involved are part of one racially, linguistically and culturally homogeneous group. Certainly family quarrels and civil wars happen. Besides, there is some truth in the allegation that Canada cashes in on the problems of the United States. Frequently Canada (or American citizens through Canada?) sells goods to those with whom the United States does no business because of military hostility, yet Canada goes on living under the protection of the United States' military umbrella.

Being small Canada can be hurt unintentionally by the United States, but being small it can also take much more than its share in international dealings without making an appreciable difference to the United States, or without making it worthwhile for the United States to take action. If small enough, one member of a cartel can chisel and get away with it—particularly if the other members or member is distracted by the political problems of maintaining the monopoly. It may be, and not entirely without reason, that Canada is again taking the risks involved in plucking a feather from the Eagle's tail.

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JAMES BONK

POINT LOBOS

I tried again that last afternoon
to read the sea's long book
of the dead. And though my eye
corners cracked to winged masks,
I could not scan that glitter
or understand the goldleaf
illumination of its paging
manuscript. Instead I sought
a stone along the shingle, a gift
of the whipsaw Pacific, lapidary
washer and grinder of copper rocks.
Now it weights paper on a desk
edge, heavy as the evidence
I need to prove I was ever there.
I notch it in the sling of my
thumb and finger and rub to recall
the big backwashing bowls of green,
and the black scuba gleam of a seal,
belly-up in a wave wallow gazing.
I lost him through the spikey
trees. At the point where sea-wolves call.

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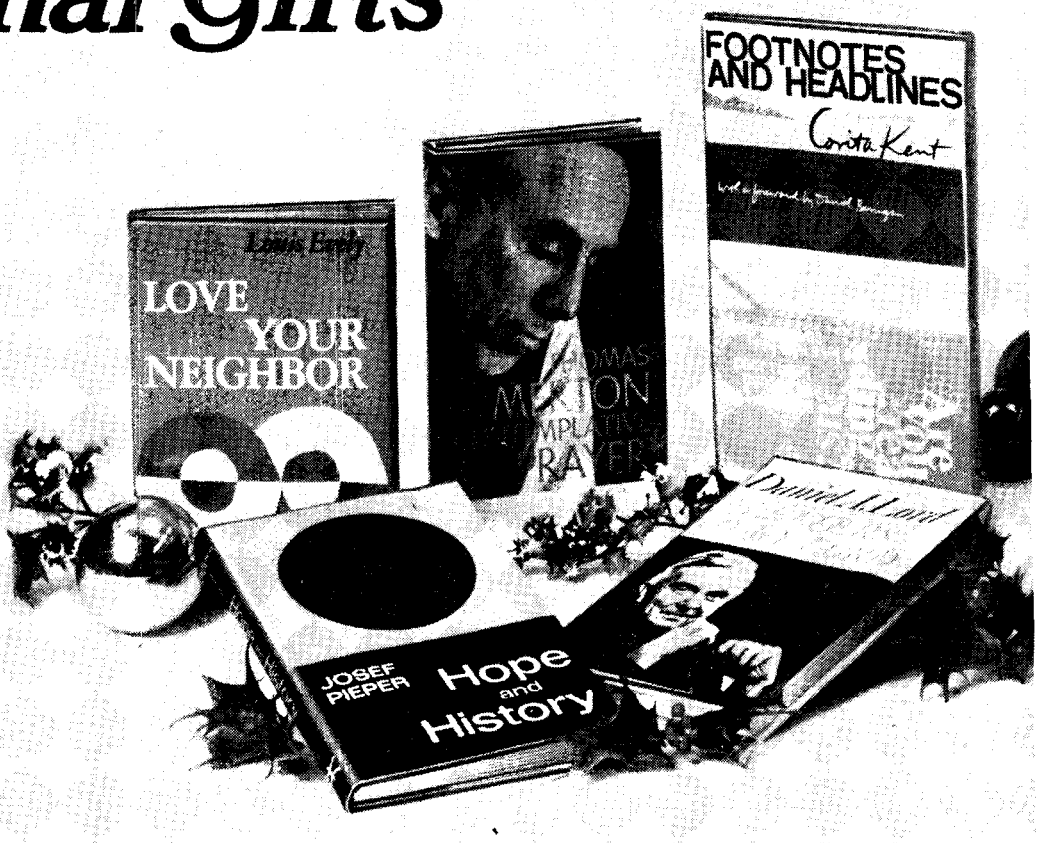

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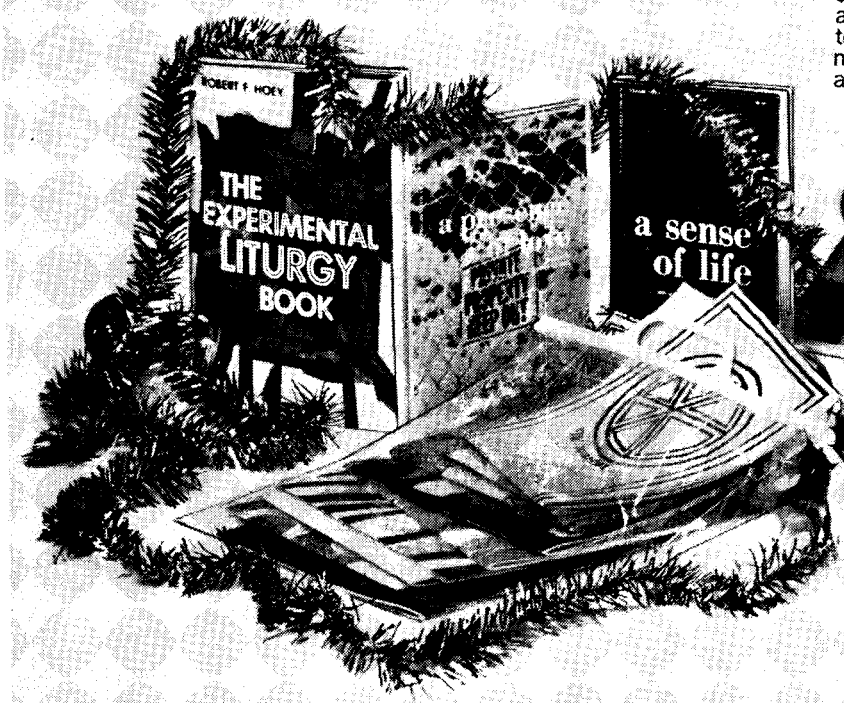

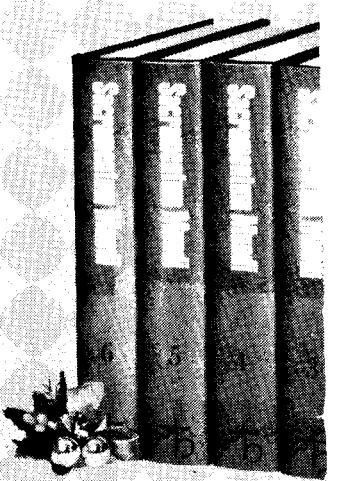

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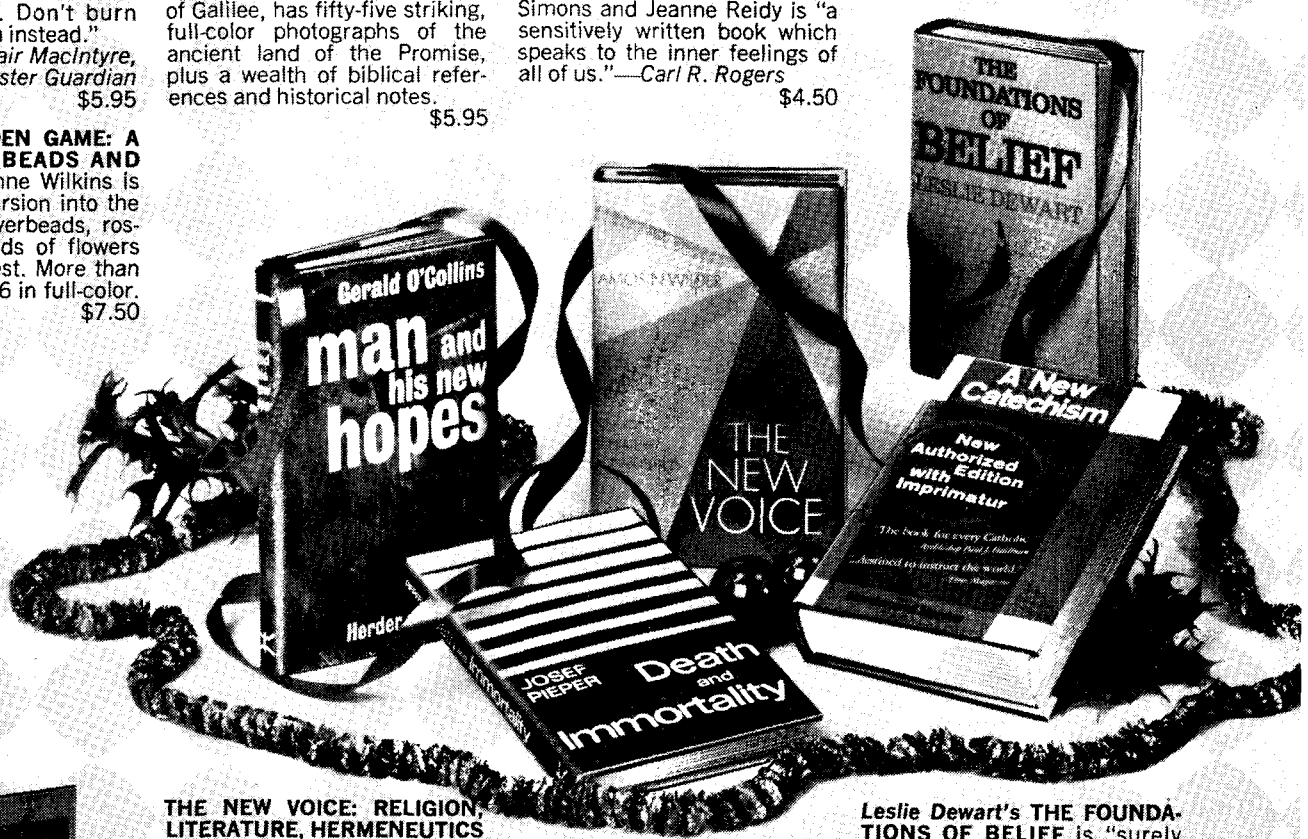

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PLEASE DON'T EAT THE CANNIBALS

THE SCREEN

Susan Sontag has been on top of so many things for several years that it is likely what she believes will be this year's chatter and next year's belief. Her remarks, whatever their ultimate value, have had a striking effect on young people and have occasioned proper sparks of provocation among intellectuals. (In spite of her traditional iconoclasm she has yet to feel the alienation of the literary establishment.) Her almost formal anarchism—a blend of straight from the hip punches and an impersonal emotionalism of response—has won her enough favors to have her gaps overlooked by protective literary overseers. Even when the critics gang up on her, they are disarmed by her elegant pose, her straight back of integrity. There is something inhuman about her—like a wood nymph spouting oracular statements as strong as storm which, when the pounding stops, drift into wind.

Not that she has not been criticized. Her novels, for instance, have taken a terrible drubbing, but always the criticism is couched in a bed of roses and bouquets to her intelligence. *She has something* is the consensus, though the something differs according to the critic writing on her.

Now she has turned to movie-making, a whole new career for her. Recently her first film, "Duet for Cannibals," was screened at the Lincoln Center Film Festival and was a sellout for its two-night showing. It was written and directed by Miss Sontag; made in Sweden with Swedish actors speaking in Swedish; Miss Sontag provided the film's subtitles. Thus three creative experiences come out of one writing shell: Miss Sontag's screenplay written in English, the Swedish actors mouthing (and homespun translation, it is assumed) of the dialogue into Swedish, and Miss Sontag's version of the Swedish dialogue into English. Characteristically her effort was loudly cheered and weakly booed by the audience which had as many middle-aged as young adherents.

The movie is intelligent, conceived in an intellectual focus, with enough irrationalities to startle and mystify and finally disarm the viewer into laughter. It has its influences: an Albee-like story; a touch of Pinter in two minor characters who play no part in the story except to be there when the camera is focusing on the main characters in a restaurant or on the street; and a whim and with-it of Genet in the characters' obsession with play-acting. Briefly and superficially the story concerns an older man writing his memoirs and putting his journals in order, who hires a younger man to help him. The younger man is ordered to live in the house with the older man and his wife. The employer and his wife begin playing games with the younger man—all sorts of games that hint at murder, rape, sado-masochism and the warmth and narcissism of childhood insularity. Eventually the older couple bring into the house the younger man's mistress who is even more quickly tempted into victimhood. She becomes in the course of a few nights a child spoonfed by her elder companions, a child sleeping between the older couple in a bedroom scene that is apparently meant to resemble a new family triangle, and a daughter seduced by or seducing her "father" while the older woman (the wife, the mother) takes moving (not very moving) pictures of it all. That eventually the film ends happily—the young couple miraculously at one point have enough sense to stop the charades and drive off into the snow and sunset—is almost immaterial. The four characters never achieve the naturalism of human beings; they are only representations of various yearnings, urges, and psychic orders found in the universality of mankind.

Undoubtedly much will be made of the various guises the characters go through—and their possible meanings. Miss Sontag is full of invention, even if some of the inventions have been tested by other film-makers. And there is a commitment in her work that does not allow anyone to dismiss her feints and sleights out of hand. But the most striking thing about the film—the one which is sure to turn up in other films, since Miss Sontag is both a barometer as well as thermometer of intellectual fancies—is the addiction to food. Sex seems almost pale in comparison to the obvious delight Miss Sontag has with her food senses. In fact, almost everything—particularly sex—bores the older couple except their indulgence in food. And if the characters love their food, their creator shows more obvious relish in delineating this passion than any other passion. Eating in this film is not always a substitute for sex, but it certainly has more variety and pleasurable sensuality.

Here are some examples: the first game the older man plays is to retch at the dinner table and run off to vomit. He returns a few minutes later to eat his dinner with gusto, and a lot of noise and lip-smacking. Food is still something he can sink his teeth into with passion. Com-

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pare the sex scene: when the older man and the young girl roll around a chair while they are being filmed by the wife, there is no passion, just labored breathing and a hint of fellatio. Certainly the writer-director doesn't linger lovingly over the matter.

Or take the most tender moment in the movie. The young man has come home one day to see his mistress (before she has been invited to the older couple's house). The mistress is hurt and confused, but she knows the battle for her man is on, and she tries to get him to quit his job. He complains about the dirt and slovenliness of her apartment, while he is buttering a slice of bread for himself. She tells him it is *their* dirt—it represents what they have made together, and she does not want to lose sight of it. Again food or the refuse of food is the symbol of love and passion. The young man understands. He crosses to the girl who has in the meantime buttered a slice of bread for herself, to eat with him. They embrace tenderly, the slices of bread unfurled behind their necks as their arms cross.

The film may be a harbinger. When sex has glutted the market, the next step will be the simple (?) joys of eating. Or the myriad ways of fulfilling the passion to eat up people. The film's title of course points the way to the film's meaning: duet for cannibals. The four characters eat each other up: they have been reduced from love to chewing. Unlike that famous scene in "Tom Jones" where the yanking of chicken thighs and breasts was a complement to lust and sexual passion, in Miss Sontag's films the characters have only enough energy to masticate their masturbatory fantasies.

If Miss Sontag's perceptions continue to titillate and influence the literary public in the way they have done up to this time, then the movie censors need not worry. The butchers and the grocers however are in for some new shop talk.

MARTIN TUCKER

BOOKS

AN INTERVIEW WITH JOYCE CAROL OATES

LINDA KUEHL

Joyce Carol Oates, at 31, has begotten four novels, *Them*, *Expensive People*, *A Garden of Earthly Delights*, *With Shuddering Fall*, and two volumes of short stories, *Upon the Sweeping Flood*, *By the North Gate* (all Vanguard Press). Numerous other stories have appeared in magazines and anthologies. She has published a volume of poetry (University of Louisiana Press), and next spring Vanguard will bring out *The Edge of Impossibility*, a collection of her critical essays.

This formidable output has won Miss Oates two nominations for the National Book Award, several O. Henry Prize Awards, a Guggenheim Fellowship and National Institute of Arts and Letters grant. While producing poetry and fiction at such great speed, she also teaches creative writing and continental literature at the University of Windsor, Ontario. A devoted sailor, like her husband, a professor of 18th-century English literature, she lives in a beachfront home on the Canadian border across the river from Detroit, the setting of her latest novel, *Them*.

Them is written in a fairly naturalistic manner, yet charged with a nightmarish quality. It depicts a poor white family: tough, resilient mother; sensitive, politically radical son; fragile, tortured daughter. The novel culminates with the 1967 Detroit riots, the author's apparent attempt to show, in wider social terms, the inevitable consequences of the poverty, violence and futility which dominate the lives of people like the Wendells.

Q. Your preface identifies your latest novel as "a work of history in fictional form." Was the creative process altered by having facts at hand —facts that you were recording?

A. Yes, I think definitely, because I felt that I must always be responsible to a certain dimension that could be verified or found fraudulent. I imagined this novel as a series of events that have more or less historical validity. The events did not necessarily happen in the order that they occur in the novel. They did not all happen to the same people, but they happened to people whom I either had known or had heard about or had read about in the newspapers, so that most of the novel is very real.

Q. Is Maureen Wendell — who is based upon a real person, a former student of yours—is she like your other precious heroines?

A. I don't think of Maureen as being very energetic. She's rather passive. One thing that happened to her —and it's really the worst thing that happened to her in the whole novel— is when she lost that stupid secretary's book. This is something that had happened to me too, and both of us responded in a very weak, rather victimized way, by being annihilated almost

LINDA KUEHL, *a frequent contributor to these pages, is a free-lance writer and critic.*

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and reduced to tears and despair by a completely foolish event which is so small and yet, when you're that age, it can sort of run over you. I think a strong person—I'm not a strong person, she's not either—a strong, impulsive child would have been affected much, oh, much more mildly by that event.

Q. *In most of your other work, there seems to be a dichotomy between your neurasthenic, sexually backward male characters and your tough, daring females.*

A. I think the dichotomy is more between intellectual and non-intellectual people rather than between male and female. At the end of *A Garden of Earthly Delights*, Swan is in love, in a way, with a cousin of his who has been in and out of the novel earlier and she is like him. She is rather weak and too . . . too self-conscious, I suppose, is the word. I have a great admiration for those females who I know from my own life, my background, my family—very strong female figures who do not have much imagination in an intellectual sense, but they're very capable of dealing with life. I think that in my writing I really admire these people and keep coming back to this kind of personality which is completely antithetical to my own.

Q. *How do the male figures like Swan and, of course, Richard in* Expensive People *fit into this particular scheme?*

A. They tend to be more intellectual and, I think, they're rather autobiographical. I project my doubts, my metaphysical and philosophical doubts, into them. That's why they erupt into violence more often.

Q. *Yes, Richard shoots his mother and Swan his stepfather. Is this the natural outgrowth of a Freudian triangle? Or did you ever think of it as such?*

A. Domestic romance? Yes, *A Garden of Earthly Delights* does have that, though it's not really a triangle. It's more between the boy and his mother. Strictly speaking, to have this

Joyce Carol Oates

Freudian romance, one must have a good strong father figure, so it's not quite that, but . . . but close to it, I think.

Q. *Why the patricide or matricide in the novels?*

A. These novels are put together in parallel construction. Each deals with a male imagination and consciousness that seeks to liberate itself from certain confinements, and only in the last novel, *Them*, does this consciousness really become liberated in what I see to be an ironic way, that an act, a gratuitous act of murder, is committed, and this frees the individual. He's on his way to some sort of American success whereas in the other two novels it didn't work. In *Them*, I saw Jules as a kind of American success in an ironic sense, of course. He is a hero and a murderer at once. I think that is ironic. I hope it is. Maybe it is a common thing. Really it's very difficult to answer these questions because, although you're bound to make perfect sense or perfect nonsense within the context of the novels, it's hard to talk about them in an analytical manner.

Q. *You can't do that to your own fiction?*

A. I don't think that one could really do that to fiction at all. That if we were to discuss Hamlet or Alyosha Karamazov and discuss these people outside the context of their world, they would make sense, because we are comparing them to more ordinary behavior in the normal context.

Q. *You've been called a gothic novelist. Do you agree?*

A. I don't know what those words mean. I use words myself in a kind of loose manner. One has to use language to communicate, though the words often don't mean anything. I'm really a romantic writer in the tradition of Stendhal and Flaubert.

Q. *In the tradition of any American novelists?*

A. I'm like Melville, I suppose. There's a similar, certain clumsiness and bluntness and a blindness toward excess which I think I share with him.

Q. *Not Faulkner?*

A. I think I'm like Faulkner. I suppose he's gothic . . . naturalistic . . .

Q. *And Flannery O'Connor?*

A. I don't know. I used to think that I was influenced by O'Connor. I don't know that I am really. She's so religious, and her works have to be seen as religious works with this other rather creepy dimension in the background, whereas in my writing there is only the natural world.

Q. *There's no Catholic or religious influence?*

A. I think of religion as a kind of psychological manifestation of deep powers, deep imaginative, mysterious powers which are always with us. And what has been in the past called supernatural, I would prefer simply to call natural. However, though these things are natural, they are still inaccessible and cannot be understood, cannot be controlled.

Q. *But you don't see any direct Catholic influence as you do in Flannery O'Connor?*

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A. I think there probably is a great deal there that I'm not owning up to. I know my first novel, *With Shuddering Fall*, was conceived as a religious work. Where the father was the father of the Old Testament who gives a command, as God gave a command to Abraham, and everything was parallel —very strictly parallel—and how we can obey or not obey it, and, if we do obey it, we're not going to get rewarded for it anyway. I think I was working myself out of the religious phase of my life and tried to show that having faith in this larger context leaves one really nowhere. One has defeated the world and defeated one's own impulses and passions and is left with nothing—sort of like a nun. I hadn't thought about that novel for many years. It's very disturbing to me, some of the things that went into it. It was very personal and very, in many ways, very autobiographical.

Q. Everything you treat seems in some way to be tinged with irony.

A. I don't do that consciously. I try to write things with happy endings, but they seem to turn out bathed in a kind of green light that I didn't imagine.

Q. Does irony have anything to do with disavowing Catholicism, that it grows out of your rebellion in a religious sense?

A. That might be, though I don't think of myself as rebelling. I think of Ivan Karamazov who returns the ticket and his brother says, "That's rebellion." And Ivan smiles sadly and says, "Well, I hadn't thought of it that way." Or, "One can't live in a state of rebellion." But this is a word that somebody else gives to it.

Q. It's not rebellion?

A. I don't think so. In any case, one goes on to the next problem which is the problem of living in the world. It seems to me a sufficiently intricate hopeless problem itself without bringing in another world, bringing in an extra dimension. Those of us who are intellectuals, so to speak, and who deal with intellectual and literary matters, have forgotten if we ever knew the toughness of the world where there isn't any money. This is the basic reality. It's economic.

Q. Your first two novels and most of your short stories take place in Eden County. Is that fictitious?

A. Yes. It's really nowhere, nowhere at all.

Q. Is Eden County your paradise lost?

A. I'm from a county that's called Erie County which is in western New York, near Buffalo and Lockport, not too far from the Great Lakes. So I imagined the county named Eden with just certain similar elements. I don't know that it's paradise lost. It's not

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paradise at all. It's pretty bad as a matter of fact.

Q. *In other words, your choice of Eden was not because of the* Garden of Eden?

A. I suppose I had that in mind. I think so. I was very interested in religious problems when I was writing those early stories, and many of them I know I had imagined as workings out of remarks of Pascal, and also Kafka, and Kierkegaard too. And I would take ideas from these men and try to illustrate them dramatically.

Q. *There is the motif of free will.*

A. I don't really know what free will means, but it's something we all think about every day of our lives. We never come to any conclusions. We think we're free. We think we're liberated or about to be liberated. It comes home to us that we're not at all free. It's a continual mystery. I really don't think we come to the end of it. It's exciting not to come to the end of something.

Q. *It's amazing that you can write a novel a year.*

A. I really write more than that. It's just that only one is published a year. Usually I'd written another novel in between that I don't publish, so that novels as they come out don't represent strict chronological order. I write the ones I don't publish with great enthusiasm. I love them when I'm writing them, and then they're all done. And so I write another novel which I love, but I like the second one better than the first, so the first one I don't submit for publication. I just keep it at home, because you tend to like the things that you've written most recently.

Q. *They come in pairs?*

A. No, they just all go along, one after the other. I have one at home that I wrote . . . I can't remember exactly when. That's about 400 pages and it has lots of references to the Vietnam War. And I can see that if I don't publish that soon it's going to be completely out of date, or I'll just have to change it to the war in Thailand or something. But it's so heartbreaking. When I wrote that novel, I said these events really took place in 1969, and I had written it in 1968, and dated it ahead thinking, well, this will be just right. But now it's going to be 1970. This novel I probably will never publish. It's a long love story. It takes place in Detroit and Grosse Point, but the Vietnam War is very real to the people who are in the novel.

Q. *How about your latest? Is this novel one you intend to publish or put away?*

A. I don't have a latest novel. I'm working on a collection of short stories about a central theme. I've been doing that lately. I have a whole lot of short stories about love—different forms of love, mainly in family relationships: mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers, and that sort of thing. So that's what I've been working on and I think that will come out in the fall of 1970. It will be called just *Love Stories*. And I'll be starting another novel which I hope will be published in 1971 if I finish it.

Q. *Do your books need a lot of editing?*

A. No. I don't change much around. I shorten some things. That's about it.

Q. *When do you do your writing?*

A. In the evening after dinner. If I start to write, I write about twenty or twenty-five pages, but I don't do that every day. Maybe a couple of days a week, or I might write some poems. If I write poetry, I might write two or three poems and then fix them up a few days later. And I've taken up painting as a kind of hobby. That's extremely enjoyable and it takes up a lot of time and I don't have any talent for it either.

Q. *Is poetry as demanding as novel writing?*

A. It's much more immediately rewarding, and there's nothing as wonderful as writing a poem, even a bad poem. It's just wonderful to have this small unit, a work of art, complete on a page before you. With a short story, particularly with a novel, it's much more of a linear thing, and it takes longer just to get through it. So the psychological reward is just a little more diffused. It's not as dramatic.

Q. *Your dust jackets say you live "a life that is a study of conventionality."*

A. Yes, I am very conventional. My husband, Raymond, and I are very ordinary, happy people and I thought I should apologize for it. I didn't have any long list of things like busboy, Western Union boy, short-order cook, naval officer—all of those things that are on most people's dust jackets. So I sort of apologized.

Q. *Then to take Maureen or Clara or Karen — all very unhappy characters—as the author is most unrealistic?*

A. No, they're not me at all. I think if I were in their position I would behave the way they do. I may be some day in the position that those people are in. Robert Lowell, in the Introduction to *Notebook*, said that writing about the journal of a very complex year in his own life and the life of the United States—how did that go?—that somehow the sorrow got in the poems but not the happiness. It's so weird and baffling. You just have to be an extraordinary artist to put in happy endings.

Q. *Would you like to?*

A. I don't know that people need happy books because a happy book is like a happy person—there's nothing to be said about it, nothing to be done to it or for it.

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Items for the chimney stocking

CRITICS' CHOICES FOR CHRISTMAS

Walter E. Arnold

A "Christmas book list" should be a kind of feast, including the old as well as the new, the paperback as well as the hardback, the hard-to-find as well as the easy-to-pick-up, in short a reader's celebration. So may I particularly commend and laud:

Elizabeth Bishop/The Complete Poems. (Farrar, Straus & Giroux, $7.50). A handsome volume and the most perfect "collected poems" of the past year. Miss Bishop's eye is fixed on the essences of things, her hand on her craft, mastery achieved. So many excellent poems, so much of the real world between two covers is a gift indeed.

Character and Opinion in the United States. By George Santayana. (Norton, paper, $1.75). The seven essays in the book were originally given as lectures to help Englishmen understand America. They can still help Americans to understand themselves. The masterful portraits of William James and Josiah Royce are here, along with so many other acute observations. Santayana's reputation as a sympathetic critic of American culture is steadily growing, and along with *The Last Puritan* this is his best book on the subject.

Because I was Flesh. By Edward Dahlberg. (New Directions, $5.00). Among American autobiographical works of the 20th century this must take its place in the first rank. The wonder is, it is not covered with prizes, if prizes meant anything, so rich is the language and so memorable is the portrait of the Kansas City lady barber who was Dahlberg's mother, Lizzie. Reading Dahlberg is one way of discovering that words have not all gone stale, flat and profitable.

Scattered Returns. (Atlantic Monthly Press, $4.75). Poems by L. E. Sissman, a former National Spelling Champion, Quiz Kid, Harvard delinquent and Boston advertising executive. His second book of poems is a welcome occasion to recall his first, *Dying: An Introduction* at least as enjoyable. It is not so much the technical facility, which is frequently missing, that makes Sissman's poems so attractive. It is their unfailingly *knowing* and faithful rendering of a small but whole world, that of Eastern Massachusetts, Boston and New York. Sissman's poems are good enough to make that world familiar—and new —to anyone who picks them up.

So Human an Animal. By René Dubos. (Scribners', $6.95). Here is one of the rarest of printed species, a book by a "hard" scientist that one need not fear to put into a book-lover's hands. Professor Dubos writes with his accustomed grace and wealth of experience of the ecological crisis that is upon us and that may be the Only Important Problem. But he writes as a man of good hope, with a wisdom rooted in knowledge of the body and the environment. Ecology is rapidly becoming the object of all the sciences of nature and of man, and Professor Dubos' book could well serve as its breviary.

Maurice R. Berube

Satori in Paris. By Jack Kerouac. (Grove Press, paper, $.75). Jack Kerouac's death was a shock. Since Kerouac exploded my consciousness in the '50s, I would be remiss in not recommending at least one Kerouac novel, one of his last, read the past year. Of late, I read him for more parochial reasons: also being a French Canadian Catholic from a similar New

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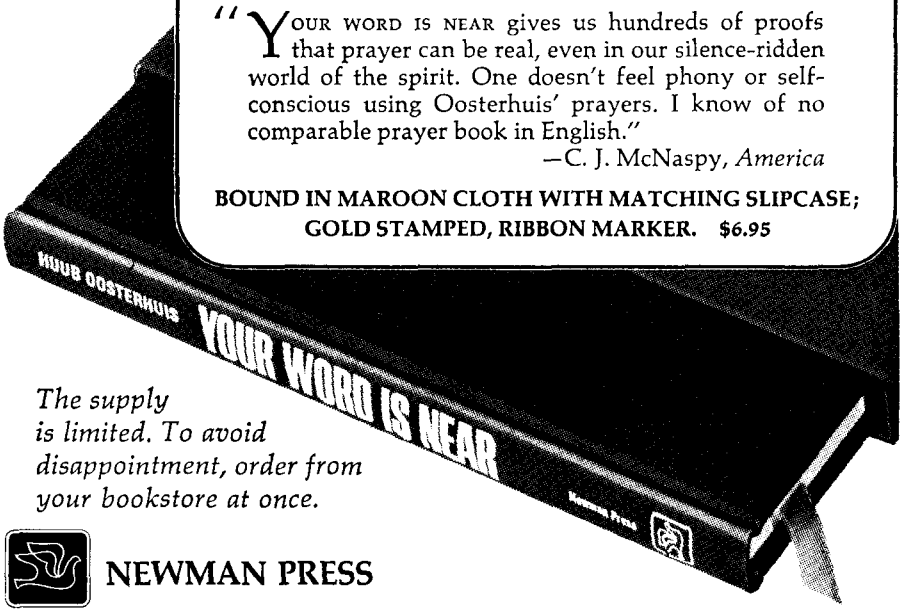

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England background, I found he best explained me to myself.

Kerouac, nonetheless, was in the great religio-literary tradition of Melville, Whitman and Hemingway. *Satori*, minor Kerouac, is delightful farce, worked in a classical American Puritan vein in which the suffering mortal journey overshadows the immortal destination. Although interest in him lagged at home, Kerouac's books were more in evidence in Parisian bookstores last summer than any other contemporary American novelist's. His stylistic innovations alone should secure his reputation; Kerouac's conventional first novel, *The Town and the City*, ranks with any of Mailer's novels, and his later work far transcends these old forms.

Given the above, it follows that I would eagerly await Carlos Baker's *Ernest Hemingway: A Life Story* (Scribners, $10). Baker's authoritative biography complements an equally definitive earlier critical estimate, *Hemingway: The Writer as Artist*. Baker succeeds in making the man emerge from the myths: a frail, courageous craftsman who blanketed himself from criticism by means of the half-truth. The defects are irritating: a penchant for too many warts, and a tendency to ignore Hemingway's milieu as counterpoint to the writer's achievement. Still, this is fearless biography of a large influence in American letters.

Much of my reading involved preparation for a book I am writing with Marilyn Gittell on urban universities. One book, Harold Taylor's *Students Without Teachers* (McGraw-Hill, $7.95), deserves to be read in this or any year for its understanding of what is happening in higher education. Taylor stands apart from his academic colleagues in his comprehension of why and how students are reshaping America's colleges and universities. Taylor, however, conjures up more than a brief for student activism; he scrutinizes the anachronistic philosophy of education prevalent in our universities today.

Jack Newfield's *Robert Kennedy: A Memoir* (Dutton, $6.95) represents advocacy journalism at its finest. The advocacy journalist treads a perilous line between bathos and irrelevance, and Newfield falters occasionally. But, he grasps the larger meaning of Kennedy as few have—the existential politician, struggling between what he was and what he was becoming, symbolizing hope for America's oppressed. Dallas took away one Kennedy's humanity and gave another his. Newfield establishes the other Kennedy in the context of an America also darkly struggling between what it was and what it was becoming and being torn asunder.

Christopher Lasch's *The Agony of the American Left* (Knopf, $4.95) almost singlehandedly raises the level of serious radical discourse. These essays, written during the last few years, are among the most provocative I have read. Lasch grinds no ideological axes; yet he has grown increasingly sympathetic to the radical impulse. Nevertheless, he penetrates beneath the cant and draws some hard conclusions. His prescription for a new radical party—to keep alive the fervor of students and the activism of the alienated—bears much deep consideration.

Sally Cunneen

The Passion and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. By Pierre Benoit. (Herder and Herder, $9.50). The director of the École Biblique in Jerusalem serves as both Virgil and Beatrice in this remarkable commentary on comparative readings of the four gospels from Gethsemane to the Ascension. He guides us painlessly through an introduction to textual critics, past endless thickets of linguistic and interpretative possibilities, never forgetting that we must rest occasionally and be reminded of the beauty and significance of what we have seen. Père Benoit's scholarly detective work as well as his joy and skill in relating the meaning of his findings are almost able to evoke the personality of the writers and the characters in this divine comedy. A book to savor and keep.

In *A Search for God in Time and Memory*. By John S. Dunne (Mac-

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millan, $6.95). John S. Dunne takes a strikingly different intellectual route in pursuit of the meaning of the mission of Jesus for alienated modern man. His way leads through perceptive analysis of the autobiographies of creative men from Paul to Camus who have captured the spirit of their own time. For Dunne believes that it is only through one's own time that one can "pass over" in understanding to the real nature of the relationship of Jesus with our silent God, whom He can familiarly call "Abba." Dense and difficult at times, the book is well worth the struggle for its remarkable opening chapter on Jesus' growing awareness of His mission, as well as for a number of brilliant and provocative historical and literary insights throughout.

The Roman Catholic Church. By John L. McKenzie. (Holt, Rinehart & Winston, $5.95). In this the great John L. takes on canon law, confession and the curia from the closing of the Canon through the recently concluded Council and leaves them all sprawling in the sawdust.

The More We Are Together (National Council of Catholic Women, Wash., D.C., 20005, $3.50) is a rare find for parents and teachers. This "Ecumenical Kit for Children from 6 to 96" is an attractive folder full of booklets and pamphlets. They include among others, a Passover coloring book, a Quaker booklet on silence, an Islamic concept of God, a book by the Mormons, an American Indian prayer and a practical Seder handbook. All are written intelligently and without condescension, as is the material submitted by the Catholics who compiled the kit and give suggestions for its use. *The More We Are Together* may well spark further local ecumenical possibilities among its readers.

Bernadette Devlin, in *The Price of My Soul* (Knopf, $5.75), says her book is "not a work of art, an autobiography, or a political manifesto." Her lively, unpretentious account of the civil rights movement in Northern Ireland—and the influences that brought her into it, make one proud to be Irish; but also help explain why she had difficulty raising money in the United States. A little more blarney, child, and cut that line about the Church selling out the Irish.

Richard Elman

All of the notebooks of Dostoevsky thus far published by the University of Chicago Press under the editorship of Edward Wasiolek have been worth their considerable expense ($12.50), but, of the lot, I have thus far found those to *The Possessed* most useful to my own concerns as a novelist. For one thing, they re-educate one to the meaning of plot in the psychological novel. Dostoevsky saw event as emotion, twists of plot as alternatives to emotions he could not bring himself to feel. This most visionary of writers was surely one of the most pragmatic: he tried out everything in his notebooks and discarded what he did not *feel* could push his plot along emotionally. It is by now trite to say that Dostoevsky wrote out of his

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despair. What the notebooks show is how—and so poignantly—through being faithful to that emotion one can begin to structure a novel.

I have been deeply moved by the novels of William Butler for quite a number of years. At one time, I learned much from them. Butler is an American writer who has lived a good part of his life in Japan. His best fiction has been published in England. This winter Scribners has published his masterpiece, *The House at Akiya* ($4.95). It is a sparse, intense, queer work of art about the disintegration of a personality. Butler's restraint is not the absence of emotion. It is the mood through which that absence is noticed and felt.

A book that sticks in the mind, too, is Morris Renek's novel, *Siam Miami* (Macmillan, $6.95). In Renek, New York has found its Dickens. *Siam Miami* is seemingly familiar material—the struggle of a pop singer to become a woman when pitted against some lecherous greedy promoters, producers etc—but Renek's vision is larger than the emblem of a girl with a wiggling fanny used to advertise his book might suggest: he is writing about buying and selling (the American religion) with ribaldry, gusto, and wit so that, almost magically, caricature is transformed into drama, and something about human possibility is affirmed that is not at all sentimental.

Finally, I should like to put in an cutright plug for the novels and poems of Gilbert Sorrentino, a writer who continues to impress me immensely. His novel, *The Sky Changes* (Hill & Wang, $3.95), is the best fiction of divorce I have ever come across, truly moving shattering experience, and a shame that it is so little known; and this year, as always, I find myself hoping that somebody will call attention to his poems which are shaped, moving, honest experiences, each and every one. Next to Ginsberg I know of no poet of his generation who comes close to his power, his language, his unforced rhythms, and lacerating feelings. I am reading him now again. I hope I shall be reading him some more in future in a large collected edition.

Josh Greenfeld

I haven't read as much fiction this year as I have in past years but somehow I feel I've missed less. There are few American novels I really crave to catch up with, and most novels that I've caught I could just as well have allowed to pass by. And I know I just can't blame this lack of excitement on the general ennui of a Republican Administration: fiction by definition and publication scheduling is a leap frog in time.

There were some novels, however, that I do think will have lives and manage to bounce along into literature. *Portnoy's Complaint* (Random House, $6.95) deserves to survive its extra-literary notoriety because of its residual literary qualities. First and last, it's a funny book. But also anyone interested in Philip Roth as a potentially major writer, I think, will eventually look behind its rather elaborate Jewish screen to find another panel in the De Kooning-like gallery of overwhelming castrating women Roth has been obsessively etching—and retching—ever since *Goodbye Columbus*.

Pictures of Fidelman (Farrar, Straus & Giroux, $5.95) by Bernard Malamud, on the other hand, was a largely underrated fictional effort. Here was Malamud on the genuine turf of his own talent—the short story, stringing a few dazzlers together into a sustaining and cohesive work. It is often comic, sometimes pathetic, and it never strainingly postures after a mythic or historic significance the way most Malamud novels do. Indeed, of all of his novels, with the possible exception of *A New Life*, I found *Fidelman* most satisfying.

Like Malamud, John Cheever is basically a short story writer. His talent is for the neat epiphany, the long seething dramatic situation at its moment of sudden boil. Cheever also is the expert par excellence of our sloshy suburban ways. But like Malamud too he is given to approaching his novels with too earnest and heavy a sense of mission. It is almost as if in writing longer than natural he feels he must impale himself on a theme that is bigger than natural—or supernatural. So his already

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overburdened comic commuters are further handicapped by being assigned cosmic weights and otherwise expert charadists go stumbling into grotesquery. Still the first half of *Bullet Park* (Knopf, $5.95), a series of suburban vignettes yet to be maligned by a literal hammer and nail forge into some inartistically—or hyper-artistically—conceived grand design, contain in their rendering of precise detail, exact ambience, perhaps the best single portrait of any slice of contemporary American life to be found in this year's fictional loaf.

I must admit that I find suspect any writer the kids seem to like. But in Kurt Vonnegut, Jr., I think, traditional college humor bad taste somehow has failed. *Slaughterhouse Five* (Delacorte, $5.95) is a watchcharm book in which levity and gravity achieve a fine balance. It is on the side of the angels without being saccharine; it is coyly mannered without being cloying. Vonnegut is a more important writer than the quality of his readers would have him seem, building with impressive slight—and sleight—a legitimate body of work.

A particularly delightful facet of *Slaughterhouse Five* for me was that it also seemed to objectify the fact of an author's successful breakthrough. Ivan Gold's *Sick Friends* (Dutton, $6.95), an almost Germanically thorough account of a deep but seemingly unfathomable love affair between a bearded East Side writer of probable promise and a big-footed West Coast painter of possible promiscuity, is another chipping of the old writer's block. Almost self-destructively, like the love affair it chronicles, it tends to take itself too seriously, making too much of itself. But there are passages of raunchy sex and borderline psychosis that are first rate. Gold is an honest-to-goodness writer and in an era of dearth perhaps he should be permitted his excesses.

If I seem to have chided in bits and pieces at some of the above novels it is only because I take them all seriously as attempts at literature rather than acts of publishing. So now let me commend them heartily: I read no better new American novels during the past year.

Wilson McWilliams

The End of Liberalism by Theodore Lowi. (Norton, $2.50) is an excellent critique of the ideas that have passed for a definition of the public good among most political scientists and too many public men. Lowi argues, rightly, that the ideas of laissez-faire liberalism —the theory of the market and of government as a "self-regulating mechanism"—have merely been translated into newer language, leaving public policy the prisoner of drift, unable to plan, and liable to capture by interest groups whose concerns are wholly parochial. Worse, "interest group liberalism" has resulted in bureaucratic administration being left, without standards, to define public goals and policies. Lowi offers solutions which will be controversial to all, and will probably seem inadequate even to those who agree; that, however, is less important than that he has the courage to venture them.

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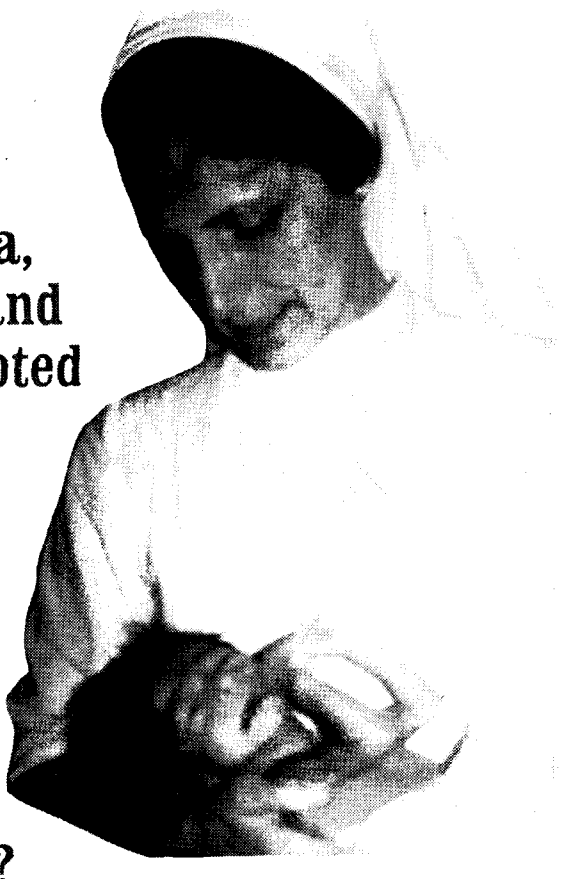

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Kolko. (Random House, $12.95) and Dean Acheson's *Present at the Creation* (Norton, $15.00) are both invaluable pictures of American foreign policy and as illustrations of the political malaise which Lowi diagnoses. Kolko is a revisionist and an academic; Acheson is a practitioner who helped shape policy as it is. Both, however, document the continued short-sightedness of American diplomacy (and, in Kolko's case, of everyone's diplomacy). Kolko's revisionist thesis leads him to do less justice than Acheson to the role of domestic interest groups and partisan politics—on which the former Secretary is superb—and much to the role of accident, personality and to struggles within the Executive. A clear picture emerges nonetheless. Kolko's work is the more essential because it is the most —in my view, almost the only—intelligent statement of the revisionist case. Perhaps more interesting is the fact that both Acheson and Kolko share a theory of international politics, which sees the old state system yielding to an international civil war which began, originally, in Europe and expanded to include the whole world. Optimists have sometimes seen this as the birth-pangs of an international society; both Kolko and Acheson provide evidence which suggests infant mortality as a likely result, and their lessons will have to be learned if there is to be any other.

Men in Groups by Lionel Tiger, (Random House, $6.95) is a seminal effort to deal, through the universal tendency of men to form intense and exclusive bonds, with the problem of human nature and human community. It is not beyond challenge; it is far from complete. Such faults, however, are hardly important. Ideas which deal with vital questions—the genuinely vital questions—are always at a premium; when they are intelligent, as Tiger's are, they are irreplaceable.

The Age of Rock edited by Jonathan Eisen (Random House, $6.95) is a valuable collection of materials on the music of the new culture, which Eisen argues is in many ways a microcosm of the whole. I know nothing about Rock, and my evaluation of the materials as music criticism is second-hand at best. As an evaluation of an important element of modern American life, however, the book is essential. I am not much in sympathy with the new culture, but Eisen's collection makes me willing to learn and listen with a somewhat more open mind, about as cheering a message as anyone is likely to receive in this time of shadows.

Richard Neuhaus

The Future of God. By Carl E. Braaten. (Harper & Row, $5.95). As every theological schoolboy knows, the building of theological "systems" ended with the death of Paul Tillich. Not so, says Carl Braaten, and he offers us a "little dogmatics" to prove his point. The reader who is able to suspend his prejudice against rationality and is open to entertaining again the possibility that "*a* is not non-*a*," will be thankful for the offering. Braaten's is the most lucid statement in English of the intellectual enterprise led by Wolfhart Pannenberg, an enterprise that goes beyond and behind the biblical theology of Jürgen Moltmann and political theology of Johannes Metz, the two best known advocates of "theology of hope." The critical response to *The Future of God* will, I believe, say a great deal about the current state of American theology.

Rights in Conflict, Dutton (cloth) $5.95, Signet (paper) .95. The most important political book of the year. In the view of one who gained some scars and a court conviction from the Chicago police riot, the "Walker Report" accurately analyzes the nature of those dark clouds shadowing American life. Studies of the Weimar Republic may now have their contemporary counterpart, illustrating the slippery but subtle slide toward a police state. With Chicago '68 the abyss first became apparent to millions who were convinced it could not happen here. The present courtroom farce of conspiracy trials and the tactics of Attorney General Mitchell, the Bull Connor of this Administration, are predictable extensions of the terror detailed in *Rights in Conflict*. Let no one say he was not forewarned.

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My Life with Martin Luther King. By Coretta King. (Holt, Rinehart & Winston, $6.95). Four days after the martyrdom, ABC television reported a memorial service in New York City: "It is fitting that this was a religious service," the announcer said, "for Martin Luther King was the son of a minister." During his lifetime, the media refused to come to terms with the religious intent and dynamic of Dr. King's work. Which is a little like a biography of JFK that leaves out the political factor. The *Life* magazine excerpts from Mrs. King's account also deleted the explicitly Christian, making King, at best, appear as a sentimental humanist. *My Life* is far from a critical biography but it does, as no other account has, depict the man moving to the promised land under the shadow of the cross. Her book is offered as supporting evidence for my contention, made elsewhere, that "if Martin King is not recognized as a saint of the church, it is a judgment upon the church and not upon the man."

Rumor of Angels. By Peter L. Berger. (Doubleday, $4.95). Relativizing the relativizers, Berger challenges the narrowing horizons of pervasive secularism. As in his *Invitation to Sociology*, he underscores the pomposities and limitations of sociology and persuasively depicts the alternative to the galloping secularization described in his *The Sacred Canopy*. The case for what he (unfortunately) calls the "supernatural" is prelude to a new and emphatically religious genre of which Harvey Cox's *The Feast of Fools* is also part. Although in the forthcoming *Movement and Revolution* Berger professes to be extremely suspicious of the youth culture, the argument of *Rumor of Angels* strengthens the current youthful disenchantment with pragmatic facticity. Martin Marty said it and I agree: "*Rumor of Angels* may prove to be the first plank in the theological platform of the '70s."

The Gathering Storm in the Churches. By Jeffrey Hadden. (Doubleday, $5.95). The message to the *relevant*-izers of religion is that they may be destroying the very churches they want to transform into change agents. Hadden sides with the movers and shakers of the new breed clergy, but urges that they connect more deeply and persuasively with the wellsprings of Christian piety and ideology. Malcolm Muggeridge has remarked that, if the churches become any more relevant to social change they will "be like NATO —a headquarters without any armies." With sociological survey and analysis, Hadden lends plausibility to the prediction. He draws on the work of Glock, Stark, Berger and others in issuing a notice that dare not be ignored by religious social activists.

William Pfaff

My recent reading has mostly been of less than recent books. As with too many people (for the comfort of authors) I buy from the remainder houses and the paperback racks, noting current books as against the time when they will reach my part of the marketplace. But one new book I've longingly examined (and badly wish someone would give me at Christmas) will never come in paper covers. It's the (London) *Times Atlas* in its new one-volume Comprehensive Edition (Houghton Mifflin, $45.). Maps, I suppose, are a special taste, but I could spend hours

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with these huge and magnificently accomplished pages, and the atlas as a whole is entirely professional—a marvelous contrast to the schoolroom condescensions and gimmickry of most atlases.

The most satisfying book I've read this year was John Lukacs' *Historical Consciousness* (Harper & Row, $7.95) which I suppose must be described as an essay in the philosophy of history, but it as brilliantly illuminates the present as the rattled course by which we have got from there to here. Original, learned, and splendidly written, the book has some of Lukacs' usual crankiness and much wit. I think it likely to prove a book of permanent and growing reputation.

George Kennan's *Memoirs* (Atlantic-Little, Brown, $10) have been much discussed by now and I found them depressing not so much for what they say about American officialdom as for what they reveal about the personal embitterment of this greatly talented man by the rough machinery of government. Yet Kennan's career was a brilliant success: I can think of no civil servant in American history who had so great, and so valuable, an impact on national policy. Certainly an indispensable modern American memoir.

I wish that I could be as kind to Gabriel Kolko's *The Politics of War* (Random House, $12.95), an immensely detailed indictment of American policy during the late war years, yet a work not of complexity but of grand simplifications: morally insensitive rather than generous, an ideologue's book and not a particularly attractive one, but sure to become a standard work of Cold War revisionism.

Still in history: H. Stuart Hughes' *The Obstructed Path, French Social Thought in the Years of Desperation, 1930-1960* (Harper & Row, $6.95), a good book on a very interesting and important period in France's intellectual life. It is better than Peter Gay's *Weimar Culture, The Outsider as Insider* (Harper & Row, $5.95), although Gay's is still a very good book, and so is Istvan Deak, also writing on the Weimar experience—which an uncomfortable number of Americans today seem to find extraordinarily interesting (*Weimar Germany's Left-Wing Intellectuals*, Univ. of California, $9.75).

I must also mention a neglected 10-year-old book now reissued as a Harper Torchbook, J. Glenn Gray's *The Warriors, Reflections on Men in Battle* ($1.95). This is a stunning philosophical memoir and comment on the moral experience of war—the personal experience—and a genuinely important work.

For sheer pleasure, another old book, Alice Toklas' *What Is Remembered* (Holt, Rinehart & Winston, $4)—marvelous and affecting. And two novels, one recent, Anthony Powell's *The Military Philosophers* (Little, Brown $4.95), best of the Music of Time chronicle, and an old, beautiful, exact, heartbreaking romance, Colette's *Mitsou*. I read this in a Corgi paperback reprint picked up abroad and Farrar Straus issued it here in 1958. It made Proust weep, and it did the same for me.

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Wilfrid Sheed

I, Capricorn, son of Pisces, have passed a quiet year at the lectern. (If you're a Capricorn, you have no choice. They're all quiet.) Discovering Kurt Vonnegut, Jr. was the closest I got to an Aquarian moon-trip. *Mother Night* (Avon, paper, .75) and *God Bless You, Mr. Rosewater* (Holt, Rinehart & Winston, $4.95) are off-lit by an eerie moral intelligence. Goodness is seen as a benign form of insanity, evil is the depth of social or political adjustment. Vonnegut's methods are also interesting. Vonnegut has taken a gag-writing technique—setting up a joke a day, cocking and firming, as he describes it—and by some miracle of subconscious architecture, has made a series of elegantly designed novels out of it. His latest, *Slaughterhouse Five* (Delacorte, $5.95), is a good place to start, if you haven't already started.

John Cheever's stories, in various volumes. *The Enormous Radio, The Brigadeer and the Golf Widow*—the standard is amazingly uniform, and you can light one story off another. Cheever is my favorite American stylist, as measured as Mozart and as light as French pastry: yet starched and weighted with good Yankee-Protestant despair.

Something to Answer For by P. H. Newby (Lippincott, $5.95) is recommended for anyone who likes to see the Novel making a bum out of other art forms. In all his books, Newby plays dazzling variations on the middle-class English novel until you would hardly recognize the old girl. Bernard Malamud's *Pictures of Fidelman* (Farrar, Straus & Giroux, $5.95) is the work of a master puddling around his studio, sketching a face, an elbow, a bowl of fruit: isolated effects that show how he gets his larger ones.

Non-fictionally, I enjoyed, face sometimes purple with disagreement, Alan Harrington's *The Immortalist* (Random House, $6.95). Reviewers have fastened on Harrington's speculations about physical survival, which are certainly spectacular; but I preferred the sections where he deals with the effects of death on the psyche. Satan, he maintains, is the price Man is willing to pay simply to survive: loathed, mocked and doomed to eternal pain, Satan never dies, in any culture.

Finally, John Gross' *The Rise and Fall of the Man of Letters* (Macmillan, $8.95) which is like a family album: all the shabby uncles of literature whom one remembers dimly from childhood, the Edmund Gosses and Andrew Langs, discussed with shrewdness and sympathy by a very bright nephew.

CORRESPONDENCE

(Continued from page 293)

sons when during the Ethiopian invasion by Italy, he was quoted as saying bombs dropping on the Ethiopians appeared like budding flowers when exploding.

I am not in favor of any war but I do not care to see dictatorships applauded. JOHN WOODWARD

CRITICS

WALTER E. ARNOLD is an editor at E. P. Dutton.

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RICHARD JOHN NEUHAUS is the editor of *Una Sancta,* an ecumenical journal of theology.

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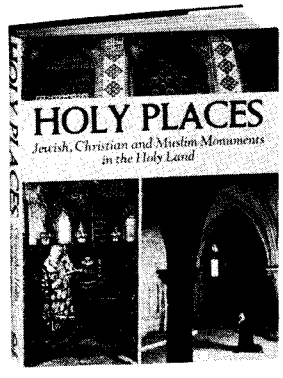

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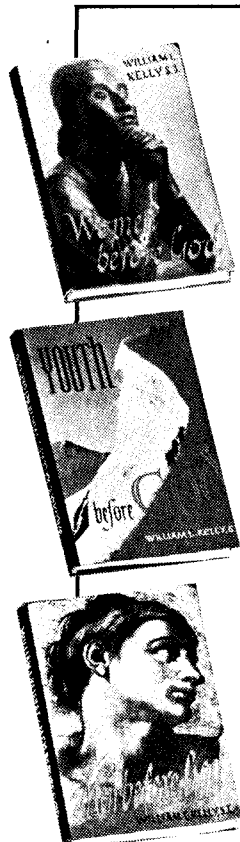

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